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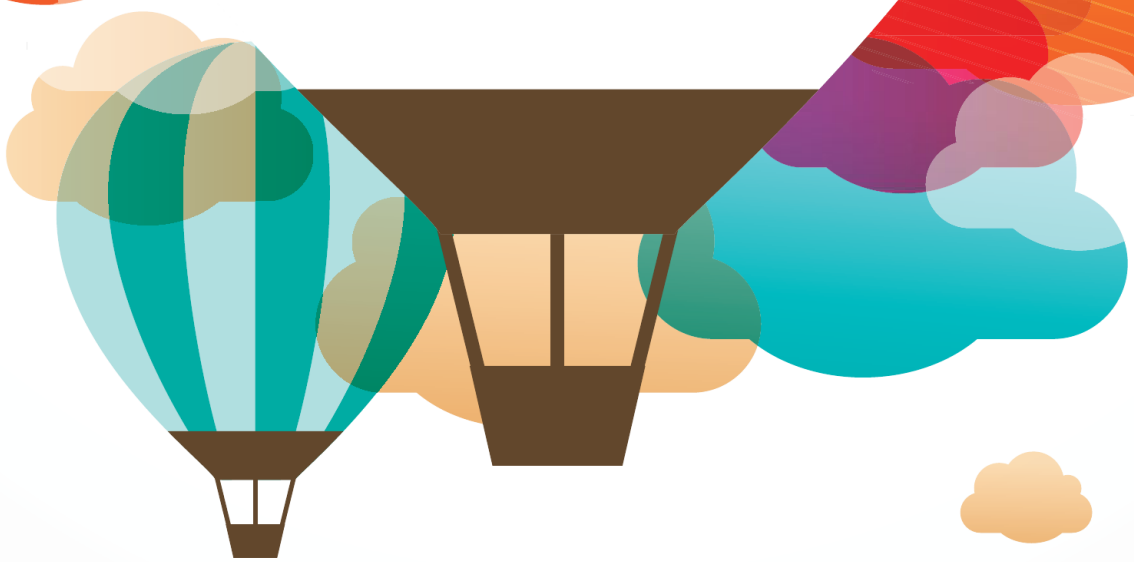

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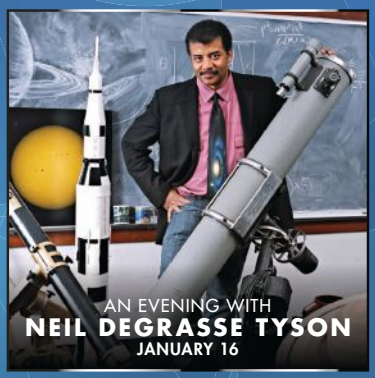

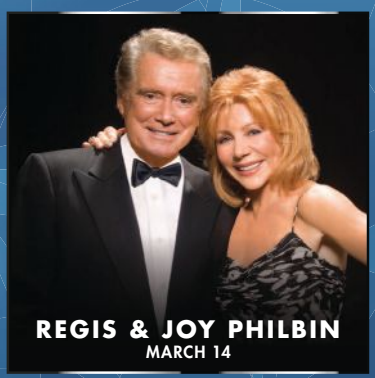

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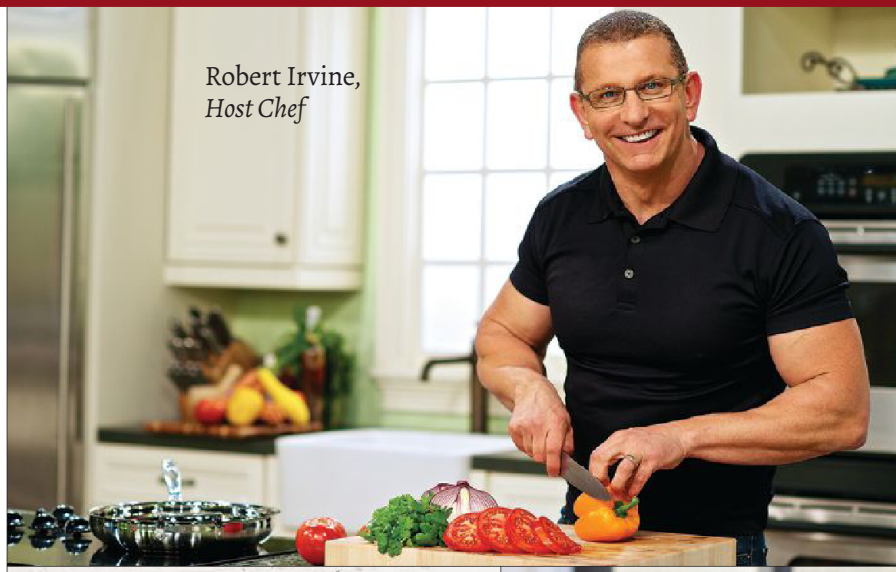

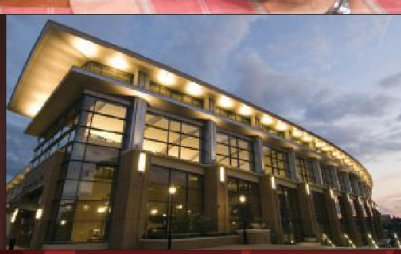

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from the editors

Food for Thought

One of the most popular aspects of this magazine—both in print and online at connecticutmag.com—is our coverage of the Connecticut dining scene. Everyone loves the thrill of discovering a great new culinary hotspot and enjoying an excellent meal, right? And nowhere is that passion for fine food more evident than in our big annual feature on the state's best restaurants.

This year we decided to indulge our appetite for excellence and take a bigger bite of the 'best-of' apple, conducting both a readers' choice survey and an experts' pick survey. When it comes to making lists of the top options for dining well, more is definitely more.

Doubling up on our features also allowed us to better extend our reach across the state. Although we try to get out and explore as many restaurants, cafés, bistros, roadside joints, diners and gourmet destinations as we can, we rely on others to tip us off to new spots and hidden gems we have yet to discover—and we've found from experience that while our readers are as savvy as our experts, they tend to highlight different places as favorites (adding spice to the 'more is more' equation).

As a result, you're likely to see us honoring a great place close to (your) home, but the real beauty is that we offer intel—consider it a roadmap—on where to go when you're out and about; when visiting friends in Litchfield, for example, or where to take the family after spending the day at Mystic Seaport. Where can you get a steak before taking in a show at The Bushnell in Harford or the Shubert in New Haven? And so on. It all starts on page 39.

In an effort to contextualize the appeal of new and fresh places, a related story in the dining section parses the charms of Kawa Ni in Westport, Red 36 in Mystic and Viron Rondo Osteria in Cheshire. Each has a different cuisine and vibe, but all offer a brand new, quality dining experience that we hope that you will want to share also.

Of course, we're not always just filling our faces (or writing about filling our faces). This month we delve into the always-complicated issue of healthcare in Connecticut with "Hospital Wars" on page 28. This in-depth piece by Erik Ofgang examines the increasing number of mergers and alliances involving hospitals, and how they are vying for the same statewide pool of patients.

Hopefully, one of these topics catches your fancy, but if not, each issue of *Connecticut Magazine* is like a buffet—if you like sports, check out our story on UConn's Ryan Boatright (page 32). Prefer entertainment? Read our Q & A with actor/singer Jeff Daniels (page 19) or our profile on up-and-coming Connecticut actress Anna Lakomy (page 10). Or for a slice of forgotten history, our new back-page feature "The Connecticut Files" kicks off with the horrific true tale of The Derby Poisoner.

In short, there's something for everyone in every issue. Enjoy!

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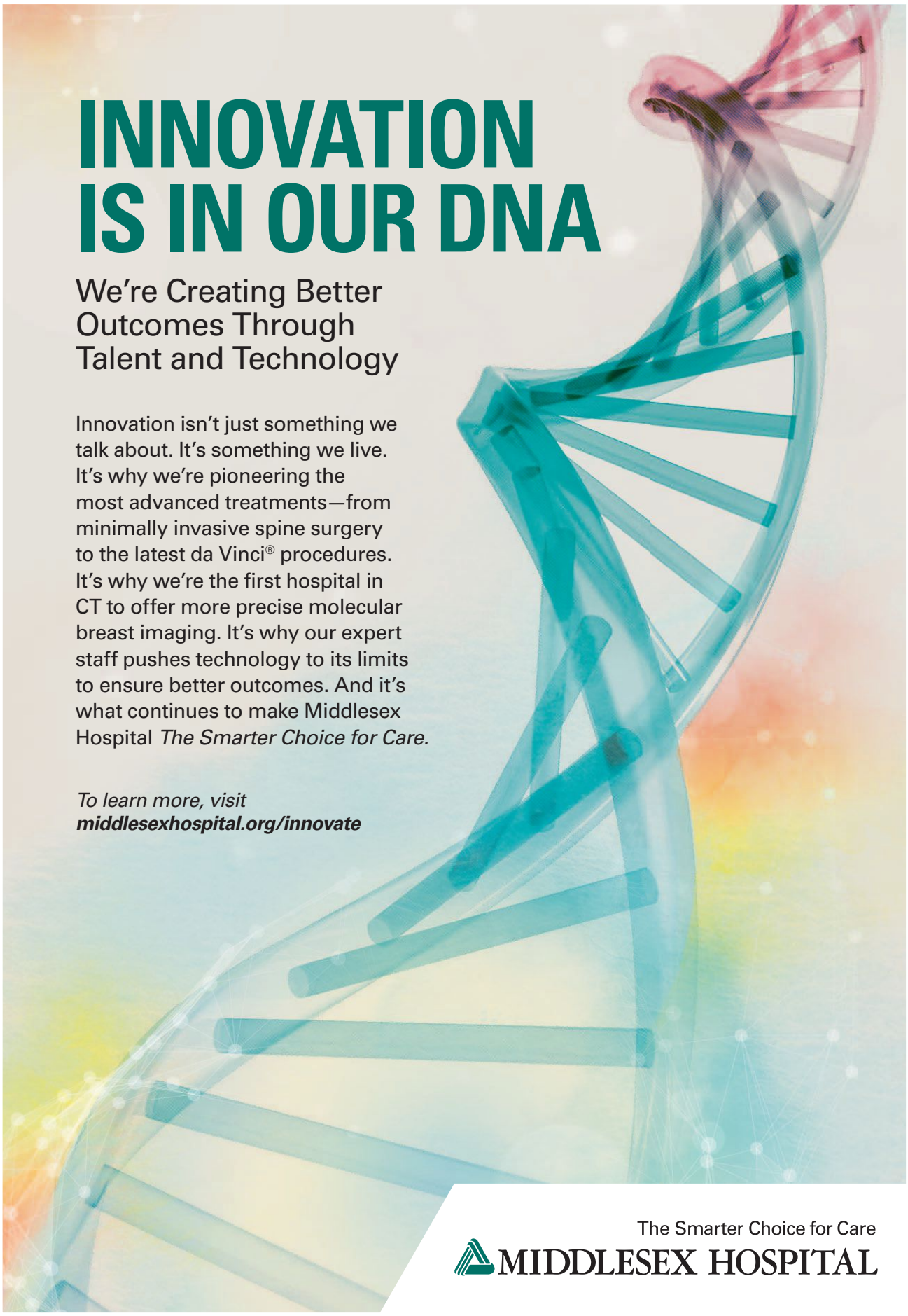

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An Unappealing Situation

THE LATEST CORPORATE TAX DODGE: APPEALING LOCAL ASSESSMENTS IN THE HOPES OF SETTLING FOR LESS.

MSWORLD/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

Several years ago, Newington Assessor S. Steven Juda become concerned about the growing flood of property tax appeals swamping his and other towns.

Juda, widely recognized by his peers as one of the state's ablest assessors, began doing what he does best: collecting and analyzing data.

The results were sobering. Connecticut municipalities are hemorrhaging at least $20 million of tax revenue a year from unjustified tax appeals, an amount equal to the annual budgets of the many medium-sized towns, Juda found.

"The number is probably greater than that," Juda says. "It's getting worse. Every time I go to (tax) court, I see assessors from other towns."

Manchester Assessor John Rainaldi, president of the Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers, calls Juda's figure accurate. He added at least another $200,000 a year is spent statewide fighting unwarranted tax appeals.

"It comes up all the time at our meetings," Rainaldi says. "What can be done about it? It's a major concern and a major issue."

"It's an Industry"

Once primarily the province of anti-tax ideologues and skinflints, local tax appeals have become big business in Connecticut and nationwide. In Connecticut alone, tax representatives—companies that specialize in bringing tax appeals—and lawyers earn millions of dollars a year challenging local assessments.

The state law firm of Pullman & Comley, for example, whose clients include Target and Walgreens, employs four attorneys in a separate tax appeal division. Joseph C. Sansone Company, a Missouri-based tax representative that operates nationwide, does so much business in Connecticut that it has a satellite office in Hartford.

"It's absolutely an industry nationwide," West Hartford Assessor Joseph Dakers Sr. says.

Both law firms and tax representatives openly recruit clients. Pullman & Comley sends emails to prospective customers already known to the firm. Sansone routinely uses the Freedom of Information Act to obtain a list of commercial property owners in towns undergoing revaluation, assessors say. It then blitzes taxpayers with letters and sometimes phone calls offering to reduce their taxes.

The offers are hard to resist because Sansone and other tax representatives charge taxpayers nothing up front, assessors say. The client only pays if the tax representative wins a reduction, the fee typically being a third to half of any savings.

By working on contingency, tax representatives can swamp a town with questionable tax appeals at very little cost to them and none to their clients, assessors complain. Unable to litigate so many cases, assessors say they have no choice but to settle, even if appeals are meritless.

"Tax representatives can be very, very frustrating for assessors," says Colchester assessor John Chaponis, who tries to resist them. "My feeling is that they don't care about fair market value at all, but rather what kind of reduction they can get for doing as little work as possible so they can charge a fee."

Joseph C. Sansone Company did not respond to requests for comment for this article. Extax Consulting Group, LLC, of Massachusetts, another tax representative active in the state, also declined comment.

Big Tax Breaks for Big Corporations, None for Homeowners

Tax representatives aren't the only problem, assessors say. Many large corporations, including Target and Walgreens, routinely appeal assessments, a practice viewed as a tax avoidance strategy instead of a dispute over value. Stop & Shop, Lowe's and Home Depot also frequently sue to lower property values, court records show.

Assessors say that even before values are set, they can predict with 80 or 90 percent accuracy what businesses will appeal.

"An assessor is never always right," Juda says. "But having said that, an assessor isn't always wrong either. And the presumption by all these appeals is that the assessors in all these communities are always wrong."

Target, for example, has appealed the assessments on 13 of its 20 Connecticut stores since 2007, winning reductions that have slashed its yearly local tax bill by hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Asked to comment on its tax appeal policies, Target spokesman Evan Lapiska said in a written statement that the Minnesota-based company "pays its fair share of taxes and utilizes available appeal procedures, when necessary, to ensure our properties are assessed at fair market value."

Facing deep-pocketed corporations, big potential legal bills, years of delay and pressure from the courts to avoid trials, assessors say they have no choice but to settle in all but the most egregious cases. Juda estimates that 95 percent of appeals result in reductions, justified or not.

| CONTINUED ON **PAGE 14** |

RUDI BISHOP

Anna Lakomy

THE SHELTON-BASED ACTRESS OF POLISH HERITAGE IS LOOKING TO MAKE HER MARK ON HOLLYWOOD.

U.S. audiences won't see *Welcome to New York*, the Abel Ferrara film The Guardian calls a "brutal, pitiless and sulphurous spin on the Dominique Strauss-Kahn sexual-assault case," until early this year—but the movie filmed in New York in 2013 had a big buzz recently because of controversy over a recut asked of Ferrara (who refused) in order to tone the film down enough to get an R-rating here.

Shown at the Cannes Film Festival last May and well-received in Europe, *Welcome to New York* has special meaning for Connecticut actress Anna Lakomy, who loves Ferrara's work and keeps tabs on the controversy regarding the director, the Wild Bunch film distribution and production services company and IFC films, which bought the distribution rights.

Much more than a fan, Lakomy performs opposite French star Gerard Depardieu as his young female assistant in *Welcome to New York*, which represents the high point (so far) in a career she has single-handedly shaped in Promethean fashion—and in just two years—after graduating from the University of Connecticut as an honors psychology major. At this point, she's her own agent, publicist and manager.

"Going to Cannes was a dream come true and one of the best experiences of my life. Seeing myself and my name in the credits on the big screen was surreal," Lakomy says in an email.

"It was the best time of my life," she elaborates when we meet for coffee at Starbucks in Stratford, not far from where she lives in Shelton, the Naugatuck Valley town to which her Polish immigrant parents brought her from New York City in 2006 when she was a teenager—where, she recalls, she initially refused to get out of the car because of all the grass.

Welcome to New York wasn't initially on the roster at Cannes. "They decided to add it in, last minute," says Lakomy, who got the news in a Google alert that launched an instant, impromptu-style European experience. "We ended up couch surfing to find a place to stay," she says, adding of one Cannes event, "We ran out of time and we had to change into our ball gowns in the parking lot."

Recently, she went to the Toronto International Film Festival, attending events and going to conferences "to learn as much as I can about filmmaking."

Her focus on strategic skills and having a strong work ethic, rather than on paying her dues while accumulating a résumé of dutifully-accepted roles amid the hope of getting discovered, is nothing new.

"When I first wanted to go into acting, one of the first things I did was read a book about the business of acting," says Lakomy. "I figured it was like a business and that's how I approached it."

That approach was gilded with a combination of confidence and a casual, nothing-at-stake attitude: "The key to acting is not having that kind of [I-have-to-get-this-role] pressure."

Lakomy's attitude is, "If you like me and I'm good for the role, great. If I'm not, I wish you all the best."

But none of that should indicate that she's not trained, or hasn't been immersed in the world of acting. "My mom (Dorothy) was a theater director in Poland," she says, and in the early 80s she worked in the Solidarity movement to the point where she was going to be arrested.

She went on pilgrimage to Italy, where she met Lakomy's father, Zenon, who's also Polish. "They ended up moving to New York, where I was born," Lakomy says.

Her mother continued to work on plays presented within the Polish community, and she instilled a love of the arts and culture in Lako-

my, who remembers being prompted to recite poetry as a girl. Theater wasn't far behind.

When she was in fourth grade at P.S. 160 in Brooklyn, her teacher had her audition for the role of Pocahontas, which she landed. ("And I got to sing too," Lakomy recalls.)

She went on to attend Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art Performing Arts in Manhattan, where she studied voice and piano, and then it was on to UConn—to major in psychology not dramatic arts.

Despite graduating magna cum laude, in March 2012, she settled on acting as a career.

Actually, the leap from psychology to acting wasn't as big as it might seem, especially given the dramatic bridge that Lakomy built.

"In college I was somewhat of an activist," she begins in describing how she wrote a psychology paper on using empathy, via literature, to battle prejudice, and in that paper she reasoned that "art is a more sneaky way of changing people's hearts and minds."

In that vein, after college, Lakomy and a close friend from UConn decided to take action to highlight and battle sexism, having read about the phenomenon of "sugar babies," or female college students who receive money to defray their education costs from older gentleman who "sponsor them."

Needless to say, these gentlemen reap special rewards for their "sponsorship."

They "got this genius idea," Lakomy says, of sitting on the steps of New York Public Library, with signs saying, "Sugar Daddy left us, need money for tuition."

It was meant as part social experiment and part performance, and it succeeded far beyond their expectations. Lakomy recalls lots of people approaching them to help, others taking videos and one man lobbying passersby on their behalf.

He said, "If you're taking a picture, please give the girls some help."

"The lines between reality and us faking it were definitely blurred," says Lakomy. "That gave me, finally, the courage … [to declare], 'I want to be an actress. I want to do things to touch people.'"

It also spawned what Lakomy hopes will become her first major project of her own, a feature film called *Sugar Baby*.

"It's coming back full circle," says Lakomy, who is hoping to start production this year and is currently assembling a team to produce the "edgy story about a NYC law student who enters a mutually beneficial arrangement with an older gentleman that ultimately comes at too high of a price."

Ferrara has read the script and called it "erotic and inspiring."

"If I could get him to produce my film, that would be the pinnacle of everything," Lakomy says. "He likes the script but what he told me already is he does his own projects. Maybe he'll squeeze some time in if I set it up properly with funding and the right people."

Last summer she worked on a psychological thriller called *Project Meridiem* about a bipolar man who terrorizes a college campus. The film shot in New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and Lakomy plays Casey, a pastor's daughter who only seems to be innocent.

In all, Lakomy has worked on more than 30 independent and student projects, and also has produced her own short film, *Brave Little Soldier*, meant to raise awareness about social issues in the military.

Last June, Lakomy went to the Philadelphia Comic Con to see the screening of a short film noir parody she worked on called *417*.

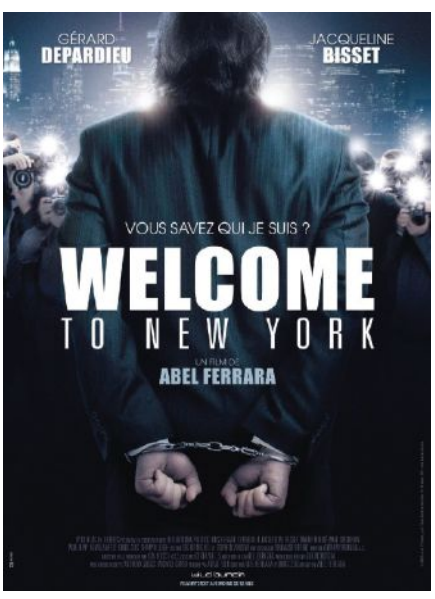
"It's been a really fun and surprising ride," says Lakomy, and for someone with her drive and talent, that ride has only just begun.

Toward the end of 2014, after the Toronto festival, Lakomy engaged in a social media campaign to make prominent her interest in winning the leading role (or any role) in a much-discussed TV project said to be in the works: "Supergirl." She had dressed the part at New York Comic Con and looked amazing. So far it remains a dream, but given Lakomy's determination, the effort will surely lead to something good.

Lakomy notes that none of it could have happened without the love and strong support of her husband, Wojciech Brodzinski, a police officer in Wilton.

"He has stuck by my career change and is the one who keeps me motivated when I keep spinning my wheels to little visible effects," she says. "He listens to all my crazy ideas and never bats an eyelash at even my biggest aspirations. I think a lot of my confidence stems from knowing how much he believes in me."

Anyone who wants to cast Lakomy, or simply learn more about her career and projects, can check out her website at annalakomy.com, or follow her on Twitter at @AnnaLakomy. | D.P.C. |



| in brief |

Ghost Town Sold

The tiny village of Johnsonville, located in Moodus, recently made national headlines when it was sold at auction for $1.9 million to a private bidder. No plans have been announced for the next phase of the property, which gained notoriety for becoming a ghost town after the death of Raymond Schmitt, who had tried for years to make it a Victorian-era tourist attraction by importing historic structures to the grounds.

When Pigs Don't Fly

In November, a woman and her pig (an "emotional support animal") were removed from a U.S. Airways flight out of Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks after the pig became disruptive and defecated, causing other passengers to complain. The pig had originally been allowed on the flight because of its "emotional support" status, but the smell from the animal was too much for fellow fliers to bear.

Charting Low

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), an organization dedicated to advancing excellence and accountability in charter schools, ranked Connecticut among the worst states for policies that hold charter schools accountable. According to The CT Mirror, the state's lack of adherence to NACSA guidelines and best practices earned it 3 out of 30 possible points—only 6 states overall scored lower, and Connecticut was the lowest scoring state that has a centeral approval authority.

Leaving a Bad Taste

According to the *Connecticut Post*, a Greenwich man was arrested by New York state troopers in November for driving while intoxicated on I-95, near the Connecticut border. He was taken to the state police barracks in Tarrytown and when the results for his breathalyzer test were printing, he grabbed them and tried to eat them. In addition to driving while intoxicated, he was charged with obstructing governmental administration and criminal tampering.

COURTESY OF *TODAY* SHOW

The Kindest Kid

The Kindest Kid in America lives right here in Connecticut—Madison to be specific.

Seven-year-old Sierra Preveza was named Chief Kindness Officer in Sprout's "Kindest Kid Contest" live on the "TODAY" show, Dec. 8. As the winner, she will take a trip to New York City to visit Sprout's corporate headquarters and receive a $5,000 charitable donation made in her name.

Preveza won the contest for the work she has done since rebounding from her battle with kidney cancer. She now dedicates her time to helping other children in their battles.

Last January, Preveza founded the 501c3 nonprofit Childhood Cancer Kids with her older sister, Emalena, and their mother, Kim Preveza.

Since launching the nonprofit, Preveza and her sister have raised $10,000 for Make-A-Wish Connecticut. She had her own wish granted, taking a trip to the Warner Bros. Studio Tour London—The Making of Harry Potter, in August 2013.

Preveza, who has been in remission for two years, makes trips to Yale-New Haven Hospital to visit other patients, share words of wisdom and hand out yoga care packages that include yoga mats, stress balls and bubbles. They are in discussions with other area hospitals to provide the care packages to patients.

Her mother is a yoga and Pilates instructor who began teaching Preveza the benefits of yoga to help her through her chemotherapy treatments. The 7-year-old shares those techniques with other children to help them through their own treatments.

"Six months after the treatment I started to worry that she was going to be a victim," Preveza's father, Doug Preveza told TODAY, "and this really transformed her from being a victim to a champion. I can't be more proud."

Several months ago, her mother nominated her to be part of the Sprout "Kindest Kid" Contest.

Sprout, which is "the 24-hour preschool channel parents and kids share together," partnered with NBC's "TODAY" show to find the kindest kids up to age 7 in the country. Preveza was one of five children selected as finalists. "I saw [the contest] on the 'TODAY' show and I thought she seems like a very good candidate," says Kim Preveza. "They had a lot of entries so it's very exciting."

"We've had good responses to her story," says Kim Preveza.

To learn about more about Preveza's charity Childhood Cancer Kids, visit childhoodcancerkids.org.

| K.H. |

RAWVELD/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

Hope for Sleepless Parents

THE BABY SLEEP WHISPERER IS HERE TO GET YOUR BUNDLE OF JOY SLEEPING LIKE, WELL, A BABY.

The Baby Sleep Whisperer is the kind of illustrious title that shouldn't be touted unless you have the goods to back it up.

Putting a fussy baby to bed is serious business, particularly for sleep-deprived new parents. Westport-based pediatric and adult sleep specialist and nutritionist Ingrid Prueher understands this.

When her second child was born, Prueher went through the ringer with getting him to sleep for more than two or three hours at a time. If she was struggling this way—as someone who had a bit of pediatric knowledge—she knew there were other parents out there who were dealing with the same issues.

Prueher has dedicated her life to babies, and she believes the sleep and nutrition of an infant is paramount to a happy and healthy start in life.

"Sleep is everything," she says. "It prevents you from having highs and lows. It balances your hormones. If you sleep well, you eat well, and if you eat well, you sleep well."

That is the crux of Prueher's business plan. Sleep is vital not just for baby but for parents as well. It can be achieved for any child—beginning when they are a newborn—by following what she calls the "five layers of cake."

Those five layers start with making sure your baby is in an environment conducive to sleep, one that replicates the womb.

The second layer is being sure your child is eating efficiently, not too often and not infrequently. Poor nutrition will prevent babies from getting a restful sleep.

You also want to make sure your child is not going to bed overtired. If they do, they will require more soothing, which is when sleep associations begin like rocking or holding your baby to put them to bed.

The fourth layer is to give your baby the right sleep cues. You want to establish set routines for both nap and bedtime. Prueher insists this can be done from day one, and doesn't have to be implemented when they're older. It will only get more difficult to establish routines the older they get.

And finally, you want to wean your child off of sleep associations like using a bouncing ball.

"This can be done whether you're bed sharing, co-sleeping or having your child sleep in a different room," Prueher assures.

The ideal situation is to put your baby down to bed easily and have them sleep through the night. This is possible for every family as long as all caregivers are on the same page and there is follow-through with the plan.

"Parents don't realize what's happening. They're not truly looking at their child as a little being that needs certain structure to sleep through the night. They're in a reactive mode," says Prueher. "'Oh the baby is getting upset, let's feed them.' Days go by, and they don't know what day of the week is. They're sleep deprived."

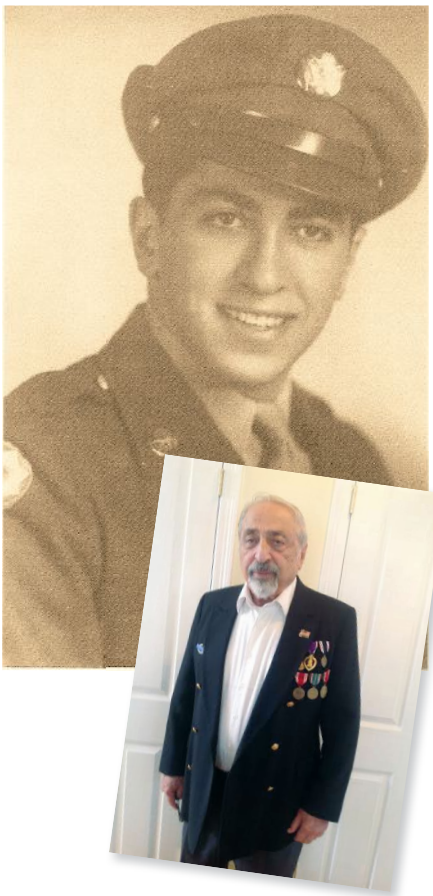
Prueher became a certified child sleep consultant through the Family Sleep Institute (FSI), which was founded by her friend Deborah Pedrick. She reached out to Pedrick for advice about putting her son Maximo to sleep. Prueher had been running a successful baby planning and consulting service for some time after leaving the finance world.

"Our training and certification program is setting the highest of standards in the sleep consulting industry," Pedrick says in a press release. "The level of professionalism and success of our FSI grads far exceeds any other educational program in this industry. We are literally creating a world of great sleepers, thanks to graduates like Ingrid Prueher."

| CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 |

A 70-Year Wait Comes to an End

IT TOOK 70 YEARS, BUT A CONNECTICUT VETERAN FINALLY RECEIVED RECOGNITION FOR HIS BATTLEFIELD ACTIONS.



Hovey in U.S. Army uniform around the time he was captured by enemy troops, and (inset) after receiving his long-delayed military honors.

It was supposed to be easy. Routine. A rout.

In the winter of 1945 19-year-old Vahan Hovey was a corporal with the U.S. Army's 12th Armored Division in Southern France. On January 15, his battalion of 800 was dispatched to the Hagenau Forest to rid the area of a small contingent of German troops.

Intelligence reports indicated there were only 90 or so German soldiers and that the operation would be "a piece of cake," Hovey, 89, of Oxford recalls.

As Hovey's battalion approached the forest they walked across a large open field that was covered in snow. That's when the enemy struck.

"They opened fire and caught us in an ambush," Hovey says.

Caught in the open, Hovey and his comrades in arms found themselves up against a Panzer diversion of more than 5,000 troops, outfitted with 25 tanks, instead of the 90 enemy soldiers and one tank they were expecting.

It was a bloodbath.

Hovey was shot in the leg and badly wounded and his battalion suffered a casualty rate of 80 percent. "They wiped us out, so to speak," Hovey says.

As he lay in the snow with hundreds of slain American troops around him, Hovey remembered reading a few months earlier that the Germans had stopped taking in wounded prisoners.

Hovey couldn't walk which, if the reports he read were accurate, would mean he'd be shot. Desperate to survive, Hovey decided to play dead. Covered in a lot of his own blood, he closed his eyes and controlled his breathing as German soldiers rifled through the pockets of the slain. As they approached him he kept up the act.

"They went through my pockets, took my wristwatch off. They tried to get my ring off; they couldn't get it," he says. Somehow Hovey managed to remain still throughout it all. The German division left and Hovey lay in the snow surrounded by his dead comrades. He wanted to crawl back to the U.S. front lines but he was too weak from loss of blood. Unable to move, he lay there for hours, from about 2:30 to 7 p.m. Then, he heard a patrol that he thought was a U.S. patrol. He called out for help, but the voice that responded did so in German.

Fortunately, contrary to what Hovey had believed would happen, the German soldiers did not kill him because he was wounded. Instead, in exchange for cigarettes they took him prisoner. Back at the German camp, a doctor operated on him without anesthetic (what little anesthetic the Germans had at that point was reserved for their soldiers). Though the procedure was painful, and multiple German soldiers had to pin Hovey to the operating table, it saved his life.

Hovey would spend the rest of the war in a variety of German hospitals, including a POW hospital in Freising, near Munich. This hospital was liberated, along with Hovey, in May of 1945.

Shortly after the war Hovey moved to Connecticut, and while pursuing a career in entertainment he changed his name to Hovey from his original last name of Hovhannisian. This name change combined with his frequent changes of address and a military fire that destroyed records, prevented Hovey from being bestowed with a distinct honor he was due. Hovey was slated to receive the Bronze Star Medal (one of the military's highest honors), the Prisoner of War Medal and the World War II Victory Medal, but he was not notified about these honors.

For decades Hovey was unaware the medals had been awarded to him. In 2009 he wrote a book, *The Hand of God: A True Testimony of God's Love and Faithfulness*, which chronicled his war experiences and talked about how he believed divine intervention kept him alive.

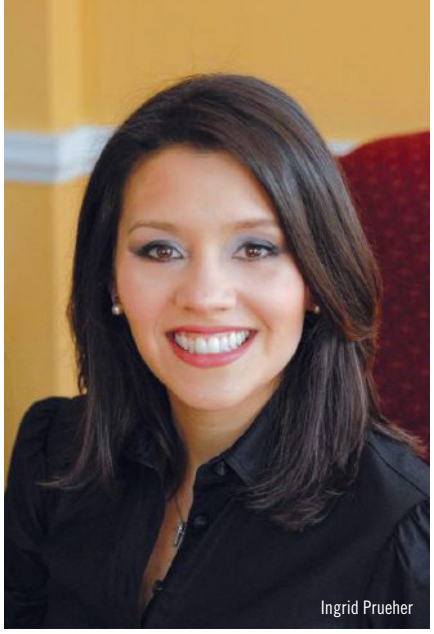
This past summer while he was being treated at the VA Hospital in West Haven Hovey gave the book to one of his nurses. The book was shown to the hospital's administration, which determined the U.S. Army was holding three medals for him.

Hovey received the medals in the mail but they have been presented to him at a variety of local ceremonies. On the morning of Nov. 11, they were presented to him in honor of Veterans Day by Hank Rotzal, commander of the Oxford American Legion.

Hovey officially received the medals almost 70 years after they were earned, and more than five decades after they were first awarded in 1962.

Hovey, who will turn 90 in January, displays no bitterness, only joy and enthusiasm.

"I was very shocked and surprised to hear about it [the medals]. I never expected it, it came completely out of the blue," he says, with well-deserved pride. | E.O. |



Ingrid Prueher

| first | parenting

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Prueher was officially certified as a Pediatric Sleep Consultant and has become a lactation counselor. She founded her website, babysleepwhisperer.com, in order to reach frustrated families who are searching for help.

She also works with adults who struggle to sleep. Her oldest client was 71 years old. Prueher says many of the "cake layers" can be implemented at any age.

Since launching her website in 2011, she has worked with more than 700 families either virtually or in person. Most of the babies she works with find restful sleep quickly. Some babies sleep as soon as the first night or typically by the end of a weekend. Prueher cannot offer a 100 percent guarantee because success revolves around parents following through with the plan. But when the plan is adhered to, sleep follows.

Prueher stars in her own reality web series on Parents.com called "Baby Sleep 911" where she meets with parents and helps them put their babies to bed. She also hosts a blog talk radio station from 9 to 9:30 p.m. on Mondays called "Baby Sleep 911 Help" in order to "reach the masses" with free advice.

Prueher is dedicated to this work because she wants to "minimize postpartum depression" and to reduce sleep deprivation. She knows of many parents who put their babies in the car and drive them around to get them to sleep.

"That's driving while you're impaired. That's illegal," she says. Prueher wants to eliminate the accidents that happen because exhausted parents get behind the wheel.

Interested parents can contact Prueher and fellow certified pediatric sleep consultant Lauren Yelvington through babysleepwhisperer.com to schedule a 20 minute "get acquainted" meeting.

For more information on The Baby Sleep Whisperer, visit babysleepwhisperer.com. For more information on the Family Sleep Institute, visit familysleepinstitute.com. | K. H. |

| first | corporate tax appeals

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

That's an argument that attorney Elliott Pollack of Pullman and Comley, whose firm has saved Target, Walgreens and others hundreds of thousands of dollars through tax appeals, does not buy. His clients' appeals are backed by data and have merit, he claims. He says assessors should go to trial if they believe reductions are unjustified.

"If they feel their numbers are correct, why do they settle?" Pollack says. "Value is an art as well as science. Tax appeals begin where the science ends."

While tax representatives and lawyers may be saving corporate America millions of dollars every year, don't expect them to knock on the door of your house any time soon. Appealing home assessments typically costs more than the potential savings, making them unattractive to tax-appeal specialists.

Meanwhile, homeowners and businesses get left holding the bag for successful appeals.

"For every stipulated judgment granting a reduction, a tax increase gets passed on to every other taxpayer in my town," Chaponis says.

"We Feel that the Deck is Stacked Against Us"

Assessors' biggest complaint is the failure of the Tax and Administrative Appeals Court in the New Britain Superior Court to make taxpayers provide documentation that municipal values are wrong.

During early pretrial conferences, judges do not require plaintiffs to present formal appraisals or detailed rebuttals of assessments. Instead, they let them submit rudimentary, often deeply flawed "analyses" supported by little or no data and prepared by un- or underqualified consultants, according to assessors.

Judges give these often questionable values the same credence as the town's carefully calculated and voluminously documented assessments and then try to get the parties to meet in the middle. That effectively flips the burden of proof from the taxpayer, where the law puts it, to the town, say assessors.

"We feel that the deck is stacked against us," Bethel assessor Ann Marie Heering says. "Mine should be considered right until it's proven wrong, and that's what the law says it should be."

Assessors say the court will order taxpayers to provide appraisals, but only when initial talks fail and cases appear headed to trial.

Judges also let out-of-state appraisers unlicensed in Connecticut and brought in for the day by Sansone and other tax representatives render opinions on value. That's a possible violation of state law because appraisers must be licensed in Connecticut to do appraisals here. The practice also raises ethical issues because appraisers are prohibited from working on contingency, the basis of many tax representatives' business.

Juda and other assessors add that tax court judges are otherwise knowledgeable, fair and do a good job. But some assessors and lawyers who defend towns in tax appeals avoid the New Britain tax court, saying local courts are quicker to compel taxpayers to present hard evidence.

"New Britain is a problem for us," says Milford assessor Dan Thomas, who tries to keep his cases in the Ansonia-Milford district.

New London attorney Jeffrey Londregan, who defends towns in tax appeal cases, also avoids the New Britain tax court. He has won relatively quick dismissals of three tax appeals since 2013 when Sam's Food Stores failed to respond to local judges' orders to present documentation that municipal assessments were wrong. Chaponis got a Sam's appeal in Colchester tossed using the same approach.

The appeals were among 61 affecting at least 67 properties that Sam's, through attorney Michael D. Reiner, one of the state's most prolific tax appeal filers, has brought since 2012.

"My client didn't respond in the time required by the court," says Reiner, who works for tax representatives and himself and defended his client's many appeals as based on solid evidence. "It was an oversight and as a result the court dismissed the cases."

Reiner, who declines to say whether he is working for a tax representative in the Sam's cases, has won the Wethersfield-based chain reductions in 32 of the cases so far, lowering its taxes by tens of thousands of dollars a year, court records show.

Asked for comment on assessors' concerns, Chief Court Administrator Patrick L. Carroll III calls the New Britain tax court "a success."

"Much of the feedback has been positive, as parties are able to have their matter addressed quickly," Carroll said in a prepared statement. "I should note that if the parties choose not to settle, they always have the option of going to trial."

Solutions

Assessors suggest much could be done to discourage abusive tax appeals: outlaw tax appeals on contingency; require taxpayers to provide appraisals or in-depth rebuttals before pretrial conferences; and enforce rules governing appraisers.

Other proposals include a separate court system for tax appeals at which judges would have independent real estate appraisers at their disposal.

"Both parties would go into a situation where the court is staffed with real estate appraisal professionals who are knowledgeable in all areas and could lend credibility to one side or the other," says Juda.

Absent change, however, the steady erosion of local tax revenue will likely continue, assessors warn. | CHRIS HOFFMAN |

community

BY KATE HARTMAN

THE ORGANIZATION: New Haven Promise

THE STORY: New Haven has made a promise to its students—that if you work hard and excel in school, you will be supported through college.

New Haven Promise, a first-of-its-kind scholarship program in Connecticut based on similar models around the country, provides scholarships up to 100 percent tuition for residents and graduates of New Haven Public Schools and approved charter schools who attend in-state public universities.

Supported and funded by Yale University, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Yale-New Haven Hospital and Wells Fargo, the scholarship sum has increased significantly each year since the organization's inception in 2010. To date, more than $2.2 million has been provided to eligible New Haven graduates.

"It's the easiest money out there," says New Haven Promise Executive Director Patricia Melton. "If they meet the requirements, they get the money."

Those requirements, while not difficult, expect a lot from students, beginning as early as sixth grade when they can sign an electronic pledge to work toward a Promise scholarship.

"The reason for the pledge is so the students know what it takes," says Melton. "They have that awareness of what they need to do."

What they "need to do" is be a New Haven resident and enrolled in public school (not a magnet student who lives elsewhere), plus have a cumulative 3.0 GPA, 90 percent attendance and 40 hours of community service. The percentage of tuition covered is dependent on how long the student has lived in New Haven; those who have been in the district since kindergarten are eligible to receive up to 100 percent coverage.

New Haven Promise students have enrolled in all the state's public universities. Scholarships automatically renew as long as students maintain a 2.0 GPA.

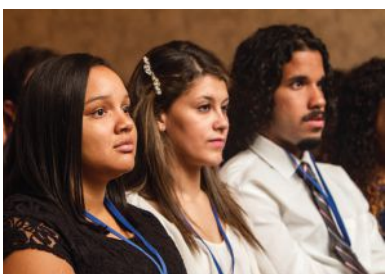
"We want to support our scholars while they're in college. We want to connect them and get them launched in their career," says Melton.

New Haven Promise ultimately aims to cultivate active members of the community by having college-educated students return to New Haven to make a difference. By starting the scholarship process when students are young (soon parents will be able to make pledges for their elementary school-aged children), they can learn the skills necessary to succeed in whatever they want to do.

"All the things we're requiring them to do is what's required if they want to go to college," says Melton. "It's what's required if they want to have a job, if they want to have a decent life."

newhavenpromise.org.

If you have an organization with an event that you'd like us to consider for the Community page, please send the details to khartman@connecticutmag.com



Top: Graduation ceremonies at New Haven's Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School and James Hillhouse High School.

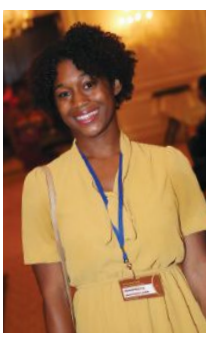
Above (top to bottom, left to right): Images from New Haven Promise's recent 2014 Scholar Celebration:

- Michael Bruno, Common Ground High School Class of 2014 and current undergraduate at UConn.

- Three current UConn undergraduates—Star Schoenmehl, Hill Regional Career High School Class of 2014; Katherine Roque, Cooperative Arts High School Class of 2014; and Carlos Roman, Amistad High School Class of 2014.

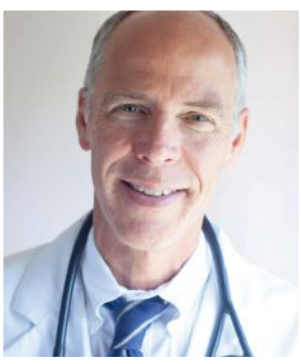
- Jose Gutierrez, Common Ground High School Class of 2014 and current undergraduate at Southern Connecticut State University.

- Johnnaya Jackson Carr, James Hillhouse High School Class of 2014 and current undergraduate at Quinnipiac University.



SCHOLAR CELEBRATION PHOTOS: CHRIS VOLPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Welcoming New OB | GYN Patients



John Sussman, MD
|
New Milford Office

Elizabeth Lucal, MD
|
New Milford & Sharon Offices

Tracey Sheedy, RPA-C
|
New Milford Office

John Sussman, MD, Elizabeth Lucal, MD, & Tracey Sheedy, RPA-C, Welcome New OB|GYN Patients

Dr. Sussman | 860.354.9321
Dr. Lucal | 860.364.5527

The Regional Obstetrics & Gynecology Offices of John Sussman, MD, Elizabeth Lucal, MD, & Tracey Sheedy, RPA-C, welcome new patients to their practices.

Our board-certified providers specialize in all aspects of obstetrics & gynecology, high risk obstetrics, minimally invasive gyn surgical procedures, including LAVH (laparoscopic assisted vaginal and total laparoscopic hysterectomy), menopause, and infertility.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 860.354.9321 or 860.364.5527. Providing compassionate care for women at every stage of life. Close to home.

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Regional Obstetrics & Gynecology - New Milford & Sharon | Compassionate care for women. Close to home.

MAGIC ON ICE

Sure to melt everyone's heart, it's *Disney On Ice presents Treasure Trove*, a jam-packed ice show featuring many of the characters from your favorite Disney animated classics. Snow White, Cinderella, Ariel, Sleeping Beauty, Peter Pan, Tinker Bell, Timon, Pumbaa and a joyful bunch of their friends will be making two stops in Connecticut this month: Jan. 8-11 at Bridgeport's Webster Bank Arena; and then Jan. 14-18 at the XL Center in Hartford.

DISNEY ON ICE PRESENTS TREASURE TROVE

JAN. 8-11 | WEBSTER BANK ARENA, BRIDGEPORT
JAN. 14-18 | XL CENTER, HARTFORD
ticketmaster.com

CHOCOLATE FEST

In case you haven't had your fill of holiday sweets—and really, who has?—The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk hosts a **Chocolate Expo** on Jan. 25 featuring more than 30 vendors offering free tastings and sales of numerous sweet treats. *(203) 852-0700, maritimeaquarium.org.*

NOT YOUR MUTTER'S 'SNOW WHITE'

German master puppeteer and actor Matthias Kuchta presents ***Lille Kartofler Figurentheater's "Snow White,"*** performed with "bizarre, life-size and very human-like creatures" on Jan. 24 at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury. *(203) 753-0381, mattatuckmuseum.org.*

HOOP DREAMS

If you love Husky hoops, ***In the Paint: Basketball in Contemporary Art*** celebrates UConn's storied basketball history and the game itself. Featuring artwork in a variety of media from contemporary artists—such as Dario Escobar's untitled Mixografia print on handmade paper (below)—the exhibit opens at the William Benton Museum of Art in Storrs on Jan. 22 and runs through April 3. *(860) 486-4520, benton.uconn.edu.*

BATTLE OF THE SEXES

Five years after their divorce, Amanda and Elyot bump into each other in 1930s Paris while honeymooning with their new spouses—and the sparks fly! Noel Coward's romantic screwball comedy ***Private Lives*** lights up Hartford Stage Jan. 8 through Feb. 8. *(860) 527-5151, hartfordstage.org.*

LAST WEEK TONIGHT THIS MONTH

COMIX Presents and Foxwoods Resort Casino welcomes award-winning writer **John Oliver**, host of HBO's hit show "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver." The sharp-witted Brit returns to the Grand Theater on Jan. 24 for what undoubtedly will be an entertaining evening of standup comedy. *(800) 200-2882, foxwoods.com.*

NEW MUSICAL FEST

On Jan. 16-18, Goodspeed Musicals presents its **10th Annual Festival of New Musicals.** The three-day event features staged readings from the brightest new writers and performers in musical theater. *(860) 873-8668, goodspeed.org.*

See January 2015 calendar listings at connecticutmag.com/calendar

TOP: © RAKOSKERTI/ISTOCKPHOTO-THINKSTOCK

Perhaps best known for the whacky, fun-loving Harry Dunne of *Dumb and Dumber* (a role he reprised this year in the sequel) and the fast-talking Will McAvoy on HBO's "The Newsroom," which is finishing its run this season, **Jeff Daniels** has proven he can tackle nearly any role. The one he was least confident about though, is the one that's closest to his heart—music. Daniels performs at Infinity Music Hall & Bistro in Norfolk with his son's band, The Ben Daniels Band, on Jan. 15 in what he calls "a variety show" filled with funny anecdotes and personal songs.

JEFF DANIELS WITH THE BEN DANIELS BAND
JAN. 15 | 8 PM
INFINITY HALL | NORFOLK
(866) 666-6306, infinityhall.com
JAN. 19 | 7:45 PM
FTC-STAGEONE | FAIRFIELD
(203) 259-1036, fairfieldtheatre.org

How long has music been a part of your life?

I was always in the choir. Any guy who could sing was valuable, so in junior high I was singing. Then in high school I joined the musicals. You take piano but you hate it, and then when you move to New York City in 1976, you buy a guitar and say, "I'm going to learn how to play this while I'm waiting in my apartment for my phone to ring."

When did you take that passion project to the stage?

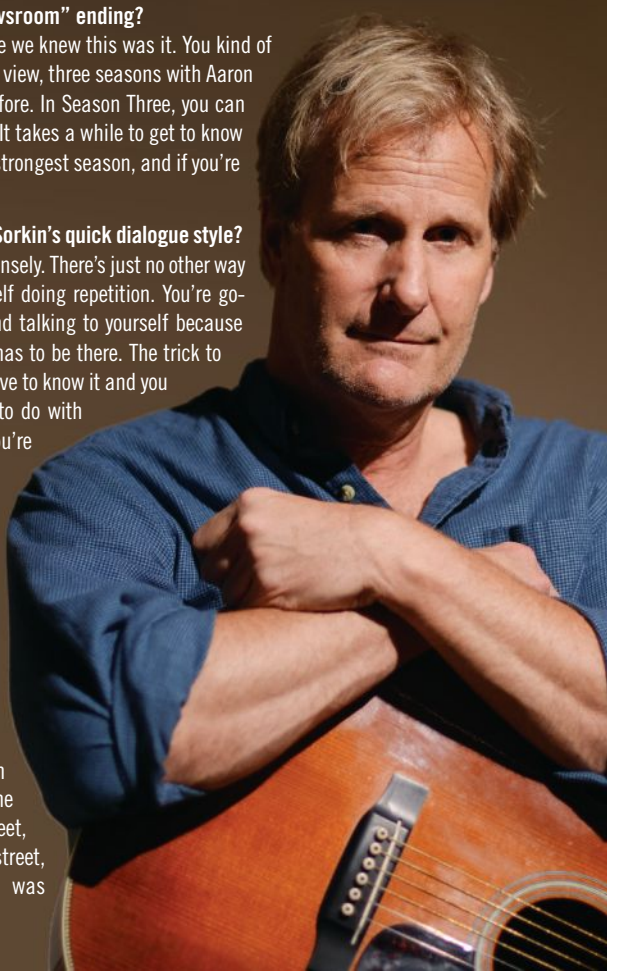
I was asked to pull these songs out to raise money for my theatre company (the Purple Rose Theatre Company in Michigan). Nobody knew I played. That's what I did on my back porch. I'm an actor. Nobody wants to see an actor sing. I just enjoyed it as a hobby, but in 2000 they said if you played your guitar in front of people we could charge them and raise money for the theatre. For the last 10 years between Christmas and New Year's, that's what I've done. It's 100 percent mine. There's no marketing team, no studio, nothing. It's all the blame and all the glory, and I like that creative control.

What's it like to perform with your son?

You look over there and you couldn't ask for anything better. It equals or tops anything else. The *Dumb and Dumber* premiere and "The Newsroom," all those things are great, but to sing original stuff, have my son tape it and tour with him, it's the best. We did this in August and it worked way better than I thought it would. They're bluesy, like Dave Matthews, influenced by hip-hop a little bit with their lyrics. I said I don't know if this will work. We're not doing covers, we're doing our original music, but they dove right in.

How do you feel about "The Newsroom" ending?

Before we started Season Three we knew this was it. You kind of accept it. From an actor's point of view, three seasons with Aaron Sorkin, that's more than I had before. In Season Three, you can see how comfortable everyone is. It takes a while to get to know the characters. I think this is the strongest season, and if you're going to go out, go out like that.

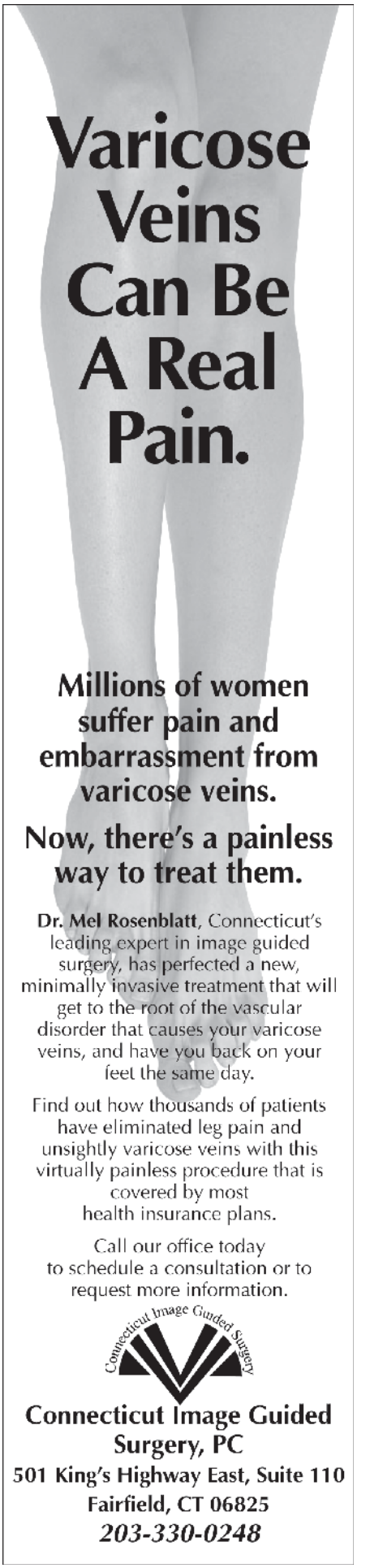


What was it like to tackle Aaron Sorkin's quick dialogue style?

I think the theatre helped immensely. There's just no other way to do it than hard work by yourself doing repetition. You're going to the supermarket in L.A. and talking to yourself because you have to. There's a pace that has to be there. The trick to Aaron's writing is at 6 a.m. you have to know it and you have to know what you're going to do with it. If you can't do it at 6 a.m., you're going to have a long day.

How was it to revisit *Dumb and Dumber* and work with Jim Carrey again?

We're friends on camera and off. Through the shooting of it and the promotional tour we just finished, he's a good guy. He cracks me up. Putting the character on was like putting on a pair of comfortable old shoes. In the first shot on the first day, the bus pulls up and we cross the street, and by the time we crossed the street, Harry and Lloyd were back. It was frighteningly easy.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KEVIN BERNE

Forever at Long Wharf Theater

It began with the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris where legends Jim Morrison, Oscar Wilde and others are buried. It's a place playwright and performer Dael Orlandersmith visits whenever she's in France, and it was to be the inspiration for her latest play before friend and director Neel Keller stepped in.

"'What got you into art?' he asked me," Orlandersmith recalls. "'Myself,' I said, 'I don't know.' Then I thought, 'the books we had in our house. In a weird way, my mom did.' He said, 'Write that story.'"

And *Forever* was born.

The title is taken from a documentary about the Parisian cemetery, but Orlandersmith's work is instead the story of her life and her relationship with her mother.

The one-woman show explores "family—the ones we were born into, the ones we create for ourselves—and the legacies that shape us all," says Orlandersmith, who also stars. "I often write about people having to invent themselves. People who have to reinvent themselves. People who have to parent themselves and be their own person. The outsider people. I want to convey a truth. I hope I've given people permission to be uncomfortable and comfortable. I hope I've told them an interesting story and I hope I've told it well."

Orlandersmith spent three years writing *Forever*, and says "it doesn't pull any punches."

"It's a beautiful, dark work," she explains. "It does deal with the complexity of a mother-daughter relationship. People should be prepared for that."

The show runs at New Haven's Long Wharf Theatre Jan. 2 through Feb. 1.

Though it may seem like a natural tendency to turn a one-person show based on the actor's life into a confessional, Orlandersmith was vigilant in avoiding that in *Forever*. She wanted to write something powerful enough that it can be reenacted by others at different theatres.

"My life isn't so precious it can't be done by other people," she says. "The person [on stage] has to create a sense of multitude. How does this one vessel dominate the stage, but in a good way? By being different people."

(203) 787-4282, longwharf.org | K.H. |

For more information, see page 66

MLK Celebration

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day each year, the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History hosts a two-day family-friendly event that shines a light on members of today's society who are dedicated to Dr. King's principles–environmental and social justice.

The term "environmental justice" was not coined until after King's passing, but author Charles Lee believes the reverend would have approved. In a speech he delivered in 1994, he quoted environmental sociologist Robert Bullard and said, "…People of color, individually and collectively, have waged a war against environmental injustices that were embedded in institutional racism. Lack of services, land use and zoning issues, inadequate, intolerable and hazardous living and work conditions. These were environmental problems in the sixties, they were environmental problems in the seventies and they continue to be our environmental problems in the 1990s."

In 1996, the incoming director of the Peabody museum and the newly created Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEEP) teamed up to teach the public about King's work and show what organizations have done to continue his legacy since then.

The first Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy of Environmental and Social Justice event was held 19 years ago, and has since grown into the museum's biggest program of the year.

This year, about 25 local organizations will host activities for all ages.

AARP Experience Corps will hand out free books to attendees and the UConn Extension Master Gardener's Program will conduct a water quality experiment on the Long Island Sound. Children will be invited to participate in an art project to be incorporated into an installation about climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

Music, drumming and dance performances will take place in the great hall and workshops will be hosted in the auditorium. The New Haven Museum, located just down Whitney Ave., will get in on the fun too by hosting story time for the children and being open to the public. A poetry slam on Monday will give teenagers the chance to take to the stage and let their voices be heard.

A full schedule of events can be found on the museum's website.

The 19th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy of Environmental and Social Justice will be Jan. 18 from 12-4 p.m. and Monday, Jan. 19 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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MOMIX Celebrates

JOHN KANE

MOMIX, one of the most innovative modern dance companies and a homegrown Connecticut treasure, celebrates its 35th anniversary with a pair of special performances at the Warner Theatre in Torrington on Jan. 17 at 8 p.m. and Jan. 18 at 2 p.m. The show will feature past, present and future pieces by the company, with something sure to please longtime fans as well as those experiencing MOMIX for the first time.

"The show is sort of a compilation album updated for the 35th anniversary season," says MOMIX founder and artistic director Moses Pendleton. "It's more in that old MOMIX style, that sort of surreal vaudeville approach, with small pieces moving through. We're reviving three or four old classics that haven't been seen in this area in 15 years or so."

For the uninitiated, MOMIX is "a very dactylic use of lighting, highly trained physical bodies, props and costumes to create a physical and visual theater that's entertaining and sensual and quite upbeat," according to Pendleton. "A lot of people enjoy the invention of it. It's lots of fun, and you can read several levels into a few of those pieces that would excite the most heady of us, I would say."

The Washington-based company of dancer-illusionists has performed around the globe, most recently selling out performances in Italy and Holland. The award-winning company has also appeared on TV and in film, and has been involved in a number of notable commercials, including for Hanes and Target. The company's popular current production, "Alchemy," is an homage to the four classic elements (air, fire, water and earth), and is nearing the end of a successful two-year run.

In conjunction with the anniversary celebration, Five Points Gallery in Torrington is welcoming *Inspirations for Dance: Moses Pendleton*, an exhibition that opens Jan. 8 and runs through Feb. 7 featuring photos and video from Pendleton. "I take a very physical approach to creativity," he says. "I take serious long walks in the country. That's how I kind of get my head together. But I'm wired in the wilderness—I do take my MP3s and cameras and lenses, and I multitask in a way, using that endorphic rush of striding fast over the dale and hills of Connecticut. I go out as a fisherman—I may bag some ideas or catch some images."

Although Pendleton continues to create all sorts of new works, the old ones evolve, too. "Every now and then I'll see something in a piece that wasn't really choreographed but because of the brilliance of the performer or the understanding of the performer, it actually changed what the choreography is," he says. "That's been very impressive, to see someone who bends your choreography in such a way, through a personal and artistic interpretation, that makes your piece better than it was. That's the song of collaboration."

Still, the favorites endure.

"It's nice to know that you wrote something 25 years ago, and people are still laughing at it today, young people especially," says Pendleton. "The fact is that many of the pieces we haven't done in so long, the parents remember it and enjoy taking their children to have that MOMIX experience. It's like Disney—another generation is always coming up. And so long as the director and the company can maintain the integrity and the energy of those pieces, that's exciting."

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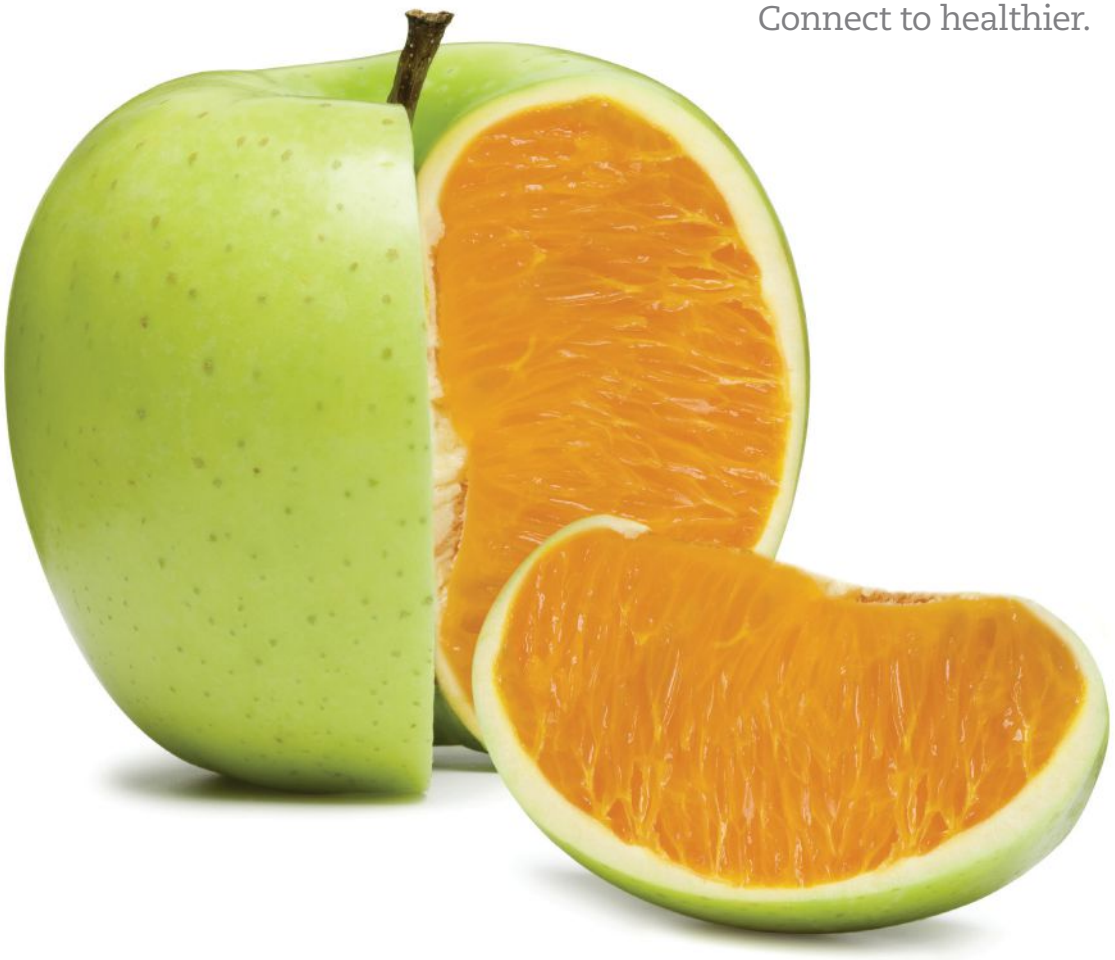

For more information, see page 66

Yes, UCAN

THE CONNECTICUT-BASED SPORTS NUTRITION DRINK IS A RESULT OF AN EFFORT TO CURE A YOUNG BOY OF A RARE DISEASE.

BY ERIK OFGANG

Meb and Jonah.

Running a marathon is one of the more intense acts of physical exertion the human body can endure. No matter how much an athlete trains, recovering from one is difficult. "You're beat up, you ache, you can't get up and stand without using your hands for support," says pro-marathon runner Meb Keflezighi. To lessen the aftereffects of the run, Keflezighi used to turn to standard energy drinks and shakes, but often they had unhealthy ingredients and would give him indigestion.

A few years ago, one of his trainers suggested he try Generation UCAN, a line of nutrition drinks by a Connecticut company of the same name. The gluten- and sugar-free drinks are made from SuperStarch, a complex carbohydrate derived from non-GMO corn designed to slowly release energy without crashes or spikes for those who use it.

Keflezighi first tried UCAN products before running the New York City Marathon in 2009; he won the race and has been using the product ever since. He says when he drinks it he doesn't feel as much soreness the day after a race, that it is "smoother on the body and more gentle" than other sports drinks, and provides consistent energy levels—"it can buy you two or three hours," he says.

Keflezighi isn't the only athlete who's fallen in love with the product. Other public proponents of Generation UCAN include Vince Wilfork, the New England Patriots All-Pro defensive tackle, and women's national 20K champion Meghan Peyton.

After his 2009 New York City Marathon win, Keflezighi reached out to Generation UCAN, which is based in Woodbridge, with a request to be a company spokesperson, a position he currently holds. When he met the company's founders he learned about the unusual history of the product. Initially, the SuperStarch that powers Generation UCAN drinks was not mass produced to help fuel athletes; instead it was discovered as part of efforts to control a terrible disease. As Keflezighi puts it, the product wasn't for enhancing athletic performance, "it was for survival."

Thirteen years ago, Jonah Feldman was born in Saint Raphael's Hospital in New Haven. Though born after a full-term pregnancy, he had a low birth weight, so multiple blood-sugar level tests were done. "When he was a day old they were testing him and they thought that their meter was broken because it kept saying low or it was reading in the 20s," recalls Wendy Feldman, Jonah's mother.

Ultimately, medical staff would determine that there was nothing wrong with the hospital instruments and the readings regarding Jonah's blood sugar were accurate. Jonah was born with Glycogen Storage Disease, which occurs in roughly 1 out of every 20,000 to 25,000 children born in the U.S., and hinders the body's ability to break down certain carbohydrates, including glycogen.

Glucose is the main source of energy for the body; generally it is stored as glycogen in the liver until needed. In the hours after a meal, the body converts glycogen into glucose and releases it to power muscles and cells. In those with the genetic form of Glycogen Storage Disease, the enzyme that is used to convert glycogen does not work properly or is missing and the body cannot access its stored energy. The results of this condition can be fatal; as recently as the 1970s children with this condition rarely survived beyond the age of 1 or 2.

By the time Jonah was born, the condition could be controlled, but doing so is not easy. Because his body has trouble converting glycogen into glucose, Jonah needed to be fed every 45 minutes at first and every couple of hours as he grew older. He would be fed Argo cornstarch via a feeding tube and would sleep through the process, but it took a toll on his parents, Wendy and Dr. David Feldman, an orthodontist. The Feldmans would sleep in short shifts, and set multiple alarms to ensure they got up in time to feed Jonah, but even so they still worried. What if the alarm didn't go off? What if they slept through it?

After reading a story about Jonah in a local newspaper, one of David Feldman's patients told him about Stephen Squinto, a local scientist and cofounder of Alexion Pharmaceuticals in Cheshire.

David says his first meeting with Squinto was unconventional. "I knocked on his door and I said, 'You don't know me but I need your help.'" Though researching a cure for Glycogen Storage Disease was not feasible for Alexion, Squinto was moved by Jonah's story. David says Squinto told him, "Alexion can't but I will help you."

Around the same time, the Feldmans set up the Children's Fund for Glycogen Storage Disease Research. In 2004, with Squinto's help they organized a symposium at Alexion Pharmaceuticals' Cheshire headquarters. The symposium brought together some families of those with Glycogen Storage Disease as well as researchers. Wendy Feldman recalls meeting with other parents who endured the same sleepless nights as she and her husband. "We were a bunch of parents sitting there exhausted because we had to wake up every couple of hours to feed our kids, just to keep them alive," she says.

Long term the group hoped to help find a cure for disease. Short term they wanted

to find a way to better control it and get some sleep.

The day after the symposium, an Alexion researcher named Karen Kumor showed up at the Feldmans' home in Cheshire. She told them that there had to be some type of starch that would work more effectively than the Argo cornstarch he was being given.

"Has anybody tested pea starch, lentil starch, legumes?" David Feldman recalls her asking. Though Kumor didn't have any specific suggestions, her idea that there had to be something out there that worked more effectively set the Feldmans on a life-altering path that ultimately led to the creation of Generation UCAN.

Through a Google search they learned about a new type of starch that had been developed in a lab in Glasgow, Scotland, by a scientist named Richard Tester. The substance was made from corn and supposedly provided a steady release of glucose, which keeps blood sugar and energy levels steady. Could it also allow Jonah to go longer without needing to be fed? The Feldmans were determined to find out.

Meanwhile, Peter Kaufman, a Connecticut IT entrepreneur, met Squinto while performing in a production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Squinto told Kaufman about Jonah's condition. Like Squinto, Kaufman was moved by the youngster's story. After meeting Jonah and his parents, Kaufman, along with his longtime business partner Shoba Murali, joined forces with the Feldmans, and together with Squinto as a scientific adviser, formed a small company to research the disease. "When we first got involved the only objective of the company was to help cure Jonah's disease," Kaufman says.

Members of the company met with Tester and were hopeful that his starch product could help for Jonah. Soon after, the Generation UCAN company was formed and began manufacturing Tester's starch, which they named SuperStarch. Soon Jonah began using it. The results were astonishing.

Instead of needing to be fed Argo cornstarch every one to three hours, using SuperStarch Jonah could go seven to eight hours. It allowed his parents to sleep through the night for the first time since he had been born.

"When it first happened, we couldn't believe it," recalls Wendy Feldman. "We tested it overnight with his doctor, we were expecting him to crash and he never did."

After further tests, they concluded that the SuperStarch was reliable. "My husband and I actually are now rested—we're not going to bed feeling as nervous," says Wendy.

But that was only the beginning of the starch's usefulness. Members of the company were beginning to wonder if the slow-releasing SuperStarch had athletic possibilities. A clinical trial of SuperStarch products was conducted at the University of Oklahoma and confirmed that use of SuperStarch maintains desirable blood glucose levels, demonstrates a muted insulin response and enhances the body's ability to use fat as an energy source.

The company brought in Jeff Volek as one of its scientific advisers; at the time, he was a professor at UConn's Department of Kinesiology. Volek was immediately impressed with the effectiveness of the product. "SuperStarch is unique in that it has a very slow absorption profile that manifests in a slow steady release of glucose into the circulation," he says. "This has three main effects: one, it avoids the spike and subsequent crash in blood glucose associated with most sugars and starches; two, it provides extended and stable blood glucose levels beyond any other carbohydrate source; and three, it has a minimal impact on insulin levels which permits greater use of fat for fuel relative to other carbohydrate sources."

He adds, "I highly recommend UCAN over any other carbohydrate source. Most athletes are consuming too many sugar-based products. There is a substantial downside to overusing sugar in terms of performance, recovery, health and longevity."

Prototypes of Generation UCAN were developed. It was one of these early forms of the product that Keflezighi received before the 2009 New York City Marathon.

Currently, Generation UCAN products can be found in select gyms and health food stores, and are sold throughout the U.S. It comes in

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several forms including the sports drink mix (which has several different flavors—lemonade and pomegranate blueberry among them), and the protein-enhanced drink mix, which comes in chocolate and vanilla flavors.

Jonah recently turned 13. He's a friendly, articulate kid with curly black hair, who is a diehard fan of the New York Rangers hockey team, and enjoys tennis and skiing. He still uses Argo cornstarch during the day and relies on SuperStarch to get through the night. He says he can feel the difference in energy when he uses SuperStarch.

When he grows up, Jonah wants to be an orthodontist like his dad and remain involved with Generation UCAN. By publicizing his story, he has inspired others with Glycogen Storage Disease, something he is justifiably proud of. "It's very exciting for all of us," he says.

Jonah is also an inspiration for others involved with the company.

Before winning the Boston Marathon in April, Keflezighi, who is 39, drank a Generation UCAN drink. He also used it before November's New York City Marathon, in which he finished fourth. A few days beforehand, he stopped in Connecticut to speak at Jonah's school, the Chase Collegiate School in Waterbury, and meet with the Feldmans again.

He continues to be inspired by Jonah. "It's been a wonderful, wonderful, experience for me," Keflezighi says.

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Alliances, mergers, partnerships, acquisitions—Connecticut's healthcare landscape is in transition as hospitals battle to increase territory, woo new patients and, ultimately, increase revenue.

Hospital Wars

by Erik Ofgang ✚ Illustration by Hal Mayforth

As 2015 opens—a year after the advent of ObamaCare brought healthcare coverage to millions for the first time—hospitals in Connecticut face a threat greater than that posed by any virus or public health issue: each other.

According to a recently released report by the state's Office of Health Care Access, Connecticut's acute-care hospitals saw operating revenue drop by 35 percent in the 2013 fiscal year. In that period, there was an increase in revenue from charitable contributions and investments, but the decrease in operating earnings—$333.6 million, down from $513.5 million in fiscal 2012—highlights the challenges many hospitals are facing.

"We see it as a shrinking pie in terms of healthcare delivery," says Patrick Charmel, CEO of Griffin Hospital in Derby. "In the past, from a financial perspective, we weren't really rewarded for providing good preventative care because we got paid when people did get sick. In the future there is going to be less money and there's going to be less utilization because we're going to be focused more on prevention and wellness and less on acute care."

One result is Connecticut attracting new specialty healthcare players, like the Hospital for Special Surgery that's scheduled to open at Chelsea Piers Stamford in February. The branch of the New York City-based hospital will specialize in orthopedics and offer medical diagnosis, pre- and post-operative care, nonsurgical management of injuries and joint pain, MRI, x-rays and more. While all the hospitals serving the Fairfield County market offer similar services, the center is clearly betting that its laser-like focus on orthopedics and the caliber of its care will siphon off patients who want "the best."

In a different example of the competition being felt within the traditional hospital landscape, in October 2013 the Hospital of Central Connecticut (part of the Hartford HealthCare Medical Group) opened a big new Family Health Center only a proverbial stone's throw from Bristol Hospital.

"We're excited to bring Hartford HealthCare Medical Group into Bristol and we look forward to becoming a partner in meeting the health and wellness needs of the community," said Kent Stahl, M.D., interim president and CEO, vice president for Primary Care, Hartford HealthCare Medical Group and vice president, Hartford HealthCare, in a July 2013 press release. He added, "By moving our Plainville office to Bristol, we can expand the range of services we provide to our current and new patients living in Bristol and in the surrounding communities."

That range of services includes the HOCC Wound Care Center. Not surprisingly, Bristol Hospital, which would surely argue it serves "the health and wellness needs of the community," broke ground in April 2014 on a new Wound Care Center on its hospital campus.

According to a press release from the hospital: "Our new center will provide a significant service to the community and offers the most modern technology for our patients," said Kurt A. Barwis, FACHE, president and CEO of Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group Inc. "Such changes and upgrades are necessary in this highly competitive age of health care, and Bristol Hospital is up to the challenge of providing the very best care and services to the residents of Greater Bristol."

Heightening the competition are the new ways that patients are going about organizing their own healthcare.

"Consumers are definitely more mobile today," says Brian Mattiello, vice president of organizational development at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington. "American medicine has become highly specialized; people who have rare conditions, or are facing a life-threatening condition, want unique care experiences, and want the best, so they're willing to travel. It's a relatively new phenomenon. Twenty-eight miles today [the distance between Torrington and Hartford] is a lot different than it was 40 years ago."

These and other factors have led the majority of Connecticut's 34 hospitals to enter into some type of merger or formal partnership with other hospitals. The frequency of these mergers and partnerships has increased rapidly in recent years, says Jim Iacobellis, senior vice president of government and regulatory affairs for the Connecticut Hospital Association. "Since 2010, there have been 16 instances of integration or attempted integration of various kinds, whereas in the decade prior, there were four," he says.

Connecticut's two biggest nonprofit healthcare systems are Hartford Healthcare, which operates six Connecticut hospitals, and the Yale-New Haven Health Network, which operates four hospitals in addition to multiple cancer centers at nonaffiliated hospitals in the state.

In addition to these two systems, there are several smaller alliances competing on a rapidly changing playing field. Tenet Healthcare Corp., a Texas-based for-profit hospital chain, was poised to acquire five Connecticut hospitals—Bristol, Waterbury, Manchester Memorial, Rockville General in Vernon and Saint Mary's in Waterbury. Tenet was planning to collaborate with the Yale-New Haven Health Network for some of its Connecticut hospitals, but in December, faced with a strict set of purchase conditions, it unexpectedly withdrew its applications for these hospitals, ending a two-year effort by the hospital chain to enter the Connecticut market.

> "The rapid change is outpacing consumers' ability to have substantial impact on the ongoing changes."
>
> —Victoria Veltri, Connecticut's Healthcare Advocate

The current situation in Connecticut has put pressure on the state's few remaining independent hospitals to join a larger group or enter into some type of formal partnership with other hospitals.

Faced with this scenario, Griffin joined with six other hospitals in Connecticut to form the Value Care Alliance last September. The alliance is aimed at allowing its members to compete with the bigger systems while retaining independent identities.

In addition to Griffin, members of the alliance are Lawrence + Memorial Hospital in New London, Middlesex Hospital in Middletown, St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport (which is owned by a national Catholic healthcare chain), and the Western Connecticut Health Network, which operates New Milford Hospital, Norwalk Hospital and Danbury Hospital.

"We think we can accomplish a lot of the same things as a big hospital system but do it at a lower cost because you're not imposing the cost of a big system infrastructure," Charmel of Griffin Hospital says. He adds that the hospitals will be pooling expenses on aspects like laboratory reference services, and building joint networks of collaboration and communication with the goal of improving the level of healthcare provided by each member of the group.

"Before, each of us would trumpet our best practices but we weren't sharing those," says Charmel. "Now we are and we're learning from each other."

"Hospital mergers were rare until about 20 years ago," explains Larry Scanlan, a former hospital executive from Pennsylvania and author of *Hospital Mergers—Why They Work, Why They Don't*. "Until then, the industry was pretty much a mom-and-pop one, with many towns having at least one, if not more, hospitals. Then, in the early and mid-90s, three factors propelled merger or merger-like activity: the expectation of significant managed care, primarily HMOs; the expectation that national health reform was coming under President Bill Clinton's administration; and the growth of the for-profit hospital industry, causing a wave of hospital mergers in the period from 1994 to 1998."

Scanlan adds, "The passage of ObamaCare has now propelled another wave of mergers as hospitals are expected to invest more in tracking and improving the quality of care, thus the need for improved information systems and communication among providers of care. Hospitals are also expected to take on more risk for care, being paid for care based more on outcomes than on episodes or visits as they have historically been, thus the need to achieve more scale or size and reduce infrastructure cost."

For-profit hospitals have also increasingly become a part of the equation.

"On a national level, during the first merger mania period, 1994 to 1998, many hospitals' compelling reasons for merging with another nonprofit was to avoid being 'taken over' by a for-profit," Scanlan says. "Interestingly, in the subsequent 10 years, 1999 to 2008, nearly half of all hospital mergers involved transactions between nonprofits and investor-owned for-profit entities. Clearly many nonprofits are now quite comfortable with doing deals with for-profit companies."

Although it's a national trend, Victoria Veltri, Connecticut's Healthcare Advocate, worries that the state's hospital landscape may be changing too rapidly.

"It's hard to tell at this point what the effect [of mergers] is on patient care," she says. "We know that there isn't a wealth of evidence yet that shows that mergers and formal collaborations are yielding increased quality. However, there is evidence of increasing costs as hospitals continue to acquire physician practices at a rapid rate and

The Insurance Impact

Shifting alliances and new networks are creating new challenges for medical insurance companies as well as consumers.

The relationship between healthcare providers and insurers is like a marriage. Sometimes it works easily, with insurance companies and hospitals and medical groups generally agreeing on reimbursement levels for patient care, and sometimes it's contentious, as in the contract squabble between Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield and Hartford HealthCare (HHC) in October. But it is always binding, forcing the two parties to work together regardless of how they feel.

As Connecticut's medical landscape continues to change, with more hospitals joining forces as part of networks, insurance companies are making changes of their own. Collaborations with medical groups, physicians associations and hospitals are becoming common as major insurance companies like Cigna and Anthem try to reach as many potential customers as possible.

Brian Cuddeback, vice president of sales and client management in Connecticut for Cigna, says it's all in the name of "better quality care at an efficient price point."

Over the last two years, Cigna has joined in seven such collaborations under the Cigna Collaborative Care system, the most recent being an initiative with the Connecticut State Medical Society-IPA in October, which aims to reach customers who get their medical care from small and midsize practices.

According to a Cigna press release, the program is designed to close gaps in care, such as health care screenings or prescription refills, reducing unnecessary emergency rooms visits and increasing preventative health visits. A critical benefit is the clinical care coordination that helps patients with chronic conditions navigate the health care system.

"The care coordination team is aligned with a team of Cigna case managers to ensure a high degree of collaboration between the medical group and Cigna, which will ultimately provide a better experience for the individual," states the press release.

But as Cuddeback says, "If you've seen one of these collaborations, you've seen one. Each is slightly different."

The "fluid nature of the marketplace" requires that each relationship have a different focus depending on the medical network's client base and goals, and those things can be modified over time.

Cuddeback admits that sometimes there is a perception that the insurance companies and the delivery systems, or medical facilities, are moving in different directions with respect to reimbursement and profits, but he maintains that all conversations start from a consensus that they're working "for the care of the patient."

The patients are the ones negatively affected when the marriage between insurance companies and medical facilities fail. That was very nearly the case when Anthem and HHC struggled to renew their contract, resulting in five hospitals being temporarily dropped from the network.

"We are extremely disappointed that Anthem ... and the Hartford HealthCare Corp. have allowed their contract to expire today without negotiating a new one," Gov. Dannel P. Malloy said in a statement released at the time. "We're not interested in assigning blame. We want to make sure that everyone in our state has access to affordable, high-quality health care. We simply cannot let profit margins stand in the way of that goal. Both companies need to return to the table and work out a deal that protects the health of Connecticut residents."

For that brief time, emergency room services continued to be covered but additional hospital services carried higher out-of-pocket costs for patients. If an agreement wasn't met by Nov. 1, another five hospitals would have been affected, but fortunately it never came to that. The two entities signed a multiyear agreement on Oct. 2, rejoining the hospitals to the network effective the day before when the contracts were set to expire. In the end there was no interruption in covered services, but the brinkmanship made for a frighteningly close call.

"We recognize this has been a trying time for our patients, providers and the community," Anthem said in a press release. "Throughout this process, we have sought to ensure our ability to be the safety net for care for all who rely on us."

That's the risk both entities run when contracts change, increase or disintegrate—losing the trust of the patients. As hospitals continue to join forces to provide better services, and insurance companies do the same, customers need to be abreast of the shifting landscape and the impact it can have on them.

"We've got to acknowledge what is going on relative to consolidation. With that consolidation, I still see that as driving opportunity," says Cuddeback. "The approach we have is with respect to cost and quality transparency. The more we are all aligned to that objective, that allows for more efficient opportunity in and amongst the three constituents: insurers, delivery systems and the patients."

| KATE HARTMAN |

lessen the competition in their market and impose additional charges via vehicles such as facility fees."

Veltri is also concerned about the size of some of the hospital systems. "There are worries that systems are getting large so rapidly that they are becoming 'must have' systems in insurer networks, and are therefore able to demand higher prices. Facility fees attached to the hospitals and provider-owned practices are not always covered by insurers and can leave consumers with hefty medical bills," she says. "The rapid change is outpacing consumers' ability to have a substantial impact on the ongoing changes. I'd like to see the pace slow way down while we consider the ramifications of the changes, and whether, in fact, quality and access have improved, and costs have stabilized."

However, proponents of bigger systems argue these systems are able to offer a higher quality of care through shared resources and the close collaboration of medical staff. Sometimes mergers are also a necessity.

In the late 1990s, the 78-bed Sharon Hospital, which serves a rural section of northwest Connecticut, was in trouble. In the years prior, the hospital suffered management succession issues, substantial operating losses, a failed IT conversion attempt and other problems. The hospital was left with three options—close, become a critical access hospital (a small hospital with limited capabilities), or pursue a sale.

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UCONN
11

Ryan Boatright has become the face of UConn men's basketball after enduring trials and tribulations that nearly ended his collegiate athletic career before it started.

Ryan's Road

by David Borges

AP PHOTO/ERIC GAY

(inset) Ryan Boatright gets a post-game hug—and unconditional support—from his mother, Tanesha, who has stood beside him throughout the lows and highs of his athletic career.

AP PHOTO/JESSICA HILL

Of all the players who have worn UConn men's basketball uniforms since Jim Calhoun took over the program nearly 30 years ago, perhaps none have had as intriguing a career as Ryan Boatright.

Sure, A.J. Price suffered a near-fatal brain hemorrhage, was suspended for a full season for stealing laptops and rebounded from a torn knee ligament as a junior to lead the Huskies to the Final Four as a senior. Stanley Robinson spent a semester away from the team on suspension, working at a nearby sheet-metal factory. No doubt, many former Huskies came from tough backgrounds, some battling academic or behavioral issues, even arrests, over the years.

But it's hard to think of anyone who's been through more ups and downs than Boatright, the 6-foot spitfire guard out of Aurora, Ill. His mercurial collegiate career was marked by controversy, delays and shifting commitments before he ever even stepped foot on a college campus. And since arriving, there have been clashes with an equally headstrong star teammate, occasionally spectacular (sometimes erratic) offensive play and stifling defense, the death of a beloved family member and, ultimately, a national championship as a junior.

That 2014 national title looked like it might be the end of Boatright's collegiate career as he seriously contemplated entering the NBA draft this past summer. His mother, Tanesha, says she believed he was going to, right up until the eve of his decision day, April 25.

The night before he had to inform UConn of his decision, Ryan talked with head coach Kevin Ollie one more time by phone, then sought some final advice from mom.

"I would love for you to get your degree," Tanesha told him. "But that's just me being a mom. I want you to be happy. If you think you can go back and be happy, do it. If you think you can leave and be happy, do that. You're my son, I just want you to be happy. I will adapt to whatever decision you make."

"O.K. mom," Ryan replied, and he said he'd sleep on it.

At about 3 a.m., Ryan knocked on her bedroom door and entered the room.

"Mom," he said, "I think I'ma stay."

"You ready?" Tanesha asked.

"I'm ready."

Ryan crawled into mom's bed and the two fell back asleep. A few hours later, he called Ollie with the news.

And with that, perhaps the most intriguing career in UConn men's basketball history was living to see one more season.

'I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS DECEITFUL'

Ryan Boatright arrived at UConn for his official visit on the weekend of Oct. 30, 2010. Just a week before, he had committed to West Virginia. But as Boatright was boarding his flight back home, he received word that the Mountaineers had received a commit-

ment from another diminutive, speedy point guard—Jabarie Hinds of Mount Vernon, New York, who arrived for his official visit to WVU the same day Boatright was leaving.

The Boatrights weren't pleased, and they called up head coach Bob Huggins to discuss the matter.

"I just thought it was deceitful," Tanesha recalls.

A few days later, just as UConn's recruiting restrictions from the Nate Miles debacle were expiring, then-Husky assistant coach Andre LaFleur gave the Boatrights a call, asking if Ryan's recruitment was still open.

"We were like, 'Heck, yeah!'" says Tanesha, a longtime fan of Ray Allen who used to call Ryan "Jesus Shuttlesworth" after Allen's character in the movie *He Got Game*. In fact, once, when Tanesha was unable to pay her cable bills for a few months, she used to repeatedly play *He Got Game* and "Through the Fire," an ESPN documentary on Sebastian Telfair, for her young sons Ryan and Michael.

About a week after his visit to UConn—during which he watched the Huskies' football team beat, ironically enough, West Virginia in double overtime—Ryan Boatright committed to UConn.

This wasn't the first time that he had backed out of a commitment to a school.

GRIDIRON DREAMS

Ryan Boatright hails from some pretty impressive athletic stock. His maternal grandfather, Tom Boatright, is a former speedy star running back at East Aurora High who went on to star at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma and would eventually be offered a $10,000 contract by the Chicago Bears in 1975. (He never played for the Bears—seems there was this other pretty good running back named Walter Payton in the way.).

Rather than take the chance and hope to crack the Bears' roster as a punt returner, Tom went back home to take care of his family: his wife, Linda—a former Aurora High cheerleader who met Tom when they were in seventh grade—and his young daughters. Tom was helping to coach some of Aurora's youth football and basketball teams when his oldest daughter, Katrina, told him she wanted to run track.

"Who coaches girls track?" he thought to himself.

But when a friend came up to him and said, "You know how you were good in sports? Well, your daughter—she doesn't have it," it gave Tom (a standout sprinter in high school, as well) the idea that he should coach her.

The next year, Katrina was the fastest girls' track sprinter in the city, and in 1988, Tom started up the Aurora Flyers track club, which has since developed hundreds of top track athletes and sent more than 30 to college on full scholarships, including three of his four daughters. Katrina wound up competing at Illinois State, Lakeya at Iowa and Tominique at Arkansas.

"(Track) was my thing, too," Tanesha says. "And then, I got pregnant."

Indeed, at age 17, her track career and college dreams were derailed when she gave birth to Ryan on Dec. 27, 1992.

From an early age, Ryan displayed the quickness and athleticism of his grandfather, his mom and aunts. But it was football, not basketball, where he shone brightest. By the time he was in junior high school, Ryan was a bona fide star on the gridiron.

"I thought he was gonna go to the NFL and be a running back, like my dad," Tanesha says. "He was so quick on the field, with his shake-and-bakes."

When he was 14, however, Ryan got an invitation to attend a basketball camp for blue-chip high school players at the University of Southern California. He played well enough to impress then-USC head coach Tim Floyd, who offered him a scholarship, despite the fact that Ryan was just an eighth-grader.

Pretty soon, word leaked out about this unusual circumstance, and it became a national story. It would hound Ryan early in his high school career, when rival fans would taunt him, saying he wasn't good enough to play in college, among other insults.

"He'd have tears in his eyes, people were really riding him," Tom Boatright recalls. "I told him, 'That's a good thing.' Smile, prove yourself. Sometimes, when you get things really fast, it doesn't last. You've got to keep working."

In fact, Tanesha believes the early scholarship offer helped Ryan stay focused throughout high school, and that he "went all out" after receiving it.

But everything changed on June 10, 2009, when Floyd abruptly resigned as USC's head coach following allegations that he gave $1,000 in cash to a man who helped steer star player O.J. Mayo to the Trojans. Ryan reopened his recruitment.

"I wish it could have gone differently," Tanesha says. "But the whole experience, I wouldn't change it for the world. I believe it made Ryan and (me) who we are. Even the bad things that came out of it—he learned, at an early age, how to take criticism. In this basketball world, there's a lot of criticism. It grew us into strong people."

So, by the time Ryan Boatright arrived in Storrs to begin summer courses in June 2011, he had already withdrew commitments from two different schools and been the figure of a national debate on how early players should be offered scholarships to college.

And things were about to get even more controversial.

'RYAN DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG'

Like any mother, Tanesha Boatright wanted to accompany Ryan on his recruiting visits to different colleges so that she could see for herself where—and with whom—her son might be spending the next four years. But as a single mom, she simply couldn't afford all those flights. So, she asked for some help from Reggie Rose, who ran Ryan's Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) program and with whom Ryan was very close. Tanesha had known Reggie (whose brother is Chicago Bulls' star guard Derrick Rose) long before Ryan played for his AAU team.

"It was real, a true family bond," Tanesha says. "I looked at it like he was my brother."

The NCAA saw things differently. Because Rose represented "nonscholastic basketball" interests, the $1,200 or so he paid for Tanesha's airline tickets were deemed impermissible benefits, and suddenly Boatright's college eligibility was in question.

Just a few hours before UConn's season-opening exhibition game with American International College on Nov. 2, 2011, the school announced that Boatright would be held out of action indefinitely while it conferred with the NCAA on the matter. He wound up sitting out both the Huskies' exhibition games and the first six regular-season games before being reinstated. Boatright played in UConn's next 10 games, and as the Huskies boarded a plane for a bout with Notre Dame on Jan. 13, 2012, the freshman guard was expecting some 400 friends and family to make the two-hour trip from Aurora to South Bend, Indiana, to watch him play.

They never got the chance. Turns out, the NCAA was looking into more information it had received from a "reliable source" relating to conditions and events that predated UConn's involvement with Boatright. Once again, Boatright would be held out of action indefinitely.

The strangest part of the story is that the information that led to the situation, as well as Boatright's initial six-game suspension, was provided to the NCAA by a man whom Tanesha had dated for about five months. When the relationship was broken off, he vowed revenge and tried to blackmail the family.

"He made up all these lies," Tanesha says. "That was the hardest part for me, because I felt like it was my fault. Ryan didn't do anything wrong. If I had made a better decision as a mom and hadn't let him into our life … it was my choice to date him, never knowing somebody would do this to you. Ryan was so strong during the process. He was really there for me. He'd be like, 'Stop crying, you didn't know he'd be this type of person.'"

Ultimately, Boatright missed another three games before the NCAA cleared him to return to action. Essentially, the NCAA absolved Ryan of most of the blame for the entire situation, though he'd have to repay $4,500 in improper benefits.

When it was finally over, Tanesha wasn't upset—just relieved.

"I give the NCAA credit," she says. "When

they finally got to where they needed to, they were like, 'This is enough. He's paid for it, it wasn't his fault.'"

After Ryan's first game back, against Notre Dame in Hartford, Tanesha sent the NCAA an email saying that she had no hard feelings.

"I think you for being wise enough to just let it end," she wrote. "Even though it was messy, hurtful, nine games, I commend them for saying 'enough is enough.'"

OVERSHADOWED BY SHABAZZ

Practically from the time Boatright first donned a UConn uniform, he bumped heads with his backcourt mate, Shabazz Napier. But despite a few scrapes in practice, even arguments captured by TV cameras, Boatright's well-publicized relationship with Napier was never as bad as many believed.

"It wasn't to the point where we hated each other," Boatright says. "The younger years of me and Shabazz, we just both had a lot of maturing to do. Coming from what we came from and having those fearless and not-back-down attitudes that we both had, we bumped heads a little bit. But we always loved each other. We had some good times, we just bumped heads a lot, just seeing stuff different. But we always wanted the best for each other."

Napier, with his late-game heroics and superior statistics, drew the lion's share of media attention. There were times when Napier and Boatright would be invited to the postgame interview room and Napier would get about 10 questions from the media while Boatright might get one or two.

"Shabazz deserved it," Boatright says. "He's a great player, he hit some tough shots. He was the leader of our team, the face of Connecticut. Jealousy isn't a thing with me. I've never been a jealous person. I want the best for all my teammates."

Following the Huskies' 63-58 loss at Cincinnati in February, Tom Boatright approached Napier, put his arm around his shoulders and whispered in his ear.

"I told him to put us on his back," Tom recalls. "He looked at me like, 'What?' I said, 'I believe in you, put us on your back.' He looked at me and said, 'Yes, sir!'"

The rest, of course, is history, as the Huskies, led by Napier's dynamic leadership, scoring and clutch play, along with Boatright's airtight defensive play, rolled to an improbable national title.

Still, last season was a tough one for Boatright on a personal level. On the night of Jan. 13, his cousin, Arin Williams, was shot to death in the bathroom of a Mexican restaurant in Aurora. Williams, whose father is Ryan's uncle, lost his mother to a brain aneurysm when he was an infant and was more like a brother to Ryan, who took the death hard.

"That was ten times worse than the [NCAA] investigation," Tanesha says. "There were moments in his voice, (I said to myself), 'I'm gonna have to get on a plane. He's not gonna be able to get through this.'"

But, with help and support from his teammates, Ryan got through it, missing just one game to attend Williams' funeral. Still, the pain of Williams' death will never go away. Tanesha remembers Arin telling her early in Ryan's freshman season, "One day, Ryan's gonna be the face of that school."

At First Night festivities this past October, Tanesha was in the crowd as her son was the last player to be introduced, his face up on the videoboard—indeed, the face of UConn.

"I got so emotional," Tanesha says. "There are moments you remember, Arin's not here."

THE WHISTLE

In the national semifinals against Florida last April, Tom Boatright watched from behind the bench as UConn got off to a horrible start. The Gators led 16-4 midway through the first half, and Ryan (or any other UConn player) couldn't get much of anything going.

Then came "The Whistle."

Any member of the Boatright family knows about "The Whistle." It doesn't matter where Tom is sitting, how big the arena is—a high school gym or AT&T Stadium—or how many people are in the crowd, Tom's whistle can always be heard above the din.

"We always knew what time it was when we heard the whistle," explains Michael Boatright McAllister, Ryan's younger brother who's now playing at Merritt Junior College in Oakland, Calif.

After Ollie called a timeout with about 8½ minutes left in the first half, it was time.

"I was walking back to the huddle; he did 'the whistle,'" Ryan recalls. "I just looked at him. He told me to calm down. 'Elbow straight, down the middle of my nose, through my eyes.' We came out, DeAndre [Daniels] hit a shot after that, we got a stop, then I hit a 3, and we rolled from there."

Boatright's three-point shot sparked a 21-6 UConn run to close out the half and give the Huskies a 25-22 halftime lead. UConn would never trail again before cutting down the nets.

But this wasn't Boatright's first trip to a Final Four. In 2011, Boatright and his family were at Reliant Stadium in Houston, where Ryan had played in a high school all-star game during Final Four weekend. While the Boatright family sat up in the nosebleeds watching UConn beat John Calipari's Kentucky Wildcats in the national semifinals, Tom pointed down to the court and told Ryan, "Man, that's where you want to be."

Three years later, the Boatrights' seats were much better, and Ryan's defensive tenacity and strong all-around game (14 points on 5-for-6 shooting) helped lead the Huskies to victory over Calipari in the national championship game.

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Kimberly Lumia, Sharon Hospital's current president and CEO, says no one wanted to see the facility close. "If you are living in Sharon and are having a significant medical emergency, and we are not here as a full-service hospital to take care of those emergencies, it's somewhere between 45 minutes and an hour and 15 minutes to get to your next closest facility," she says. "The community was very passionate about having a hospital here."

In 2002, Essent Healthcare, which merged with the Tennessee-based RegionalCare Hospital Partners in 2011, purchased Sharon Hospital, making it the first for-profit hospital in the state. [A group called the Community Association to Save Sharon Hospital fought the sale, and then-Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and the state Office of Health Care Access rigorously scrutinized the conversion in a process that included a series of hearings in which concerns were aired.]

Essent committed to delivering $19 million in capital improvements to the hospital, including a new emergency room. As the first for-profit hospital in Connecticut, Sharon began paying state and town taxes. The hospital now pays about $3.8 million annually in taxes, about $400,000 of which goes to the town of Sharon.

Sharon currently remains the only for-profit hospital in the state. Tenet had hoped to change that before withdrawing its Connecticut hospital applications. In a sign of just how volatile Connecticut's hospital situation is, just a few weeks before Tenet withdrew, Erik G. Wexler, CEO of the Northeast Region for Tenet Healthcare, enthusiastically touted the company's arrival in Connecticut, saying each of the Connecticut hospitals the company hoped to acquire would keep its name and its local identity.

"Healthcare is local. We expect to stay closely engaged with the employees and the leadership teams and the medical staff, and boards of trustees of each of these hospitals, to make sure that we're delivering care to the community in the way that the community so desires," he said. "We plan on making a considerable investment in these hospitals and in the communities in which they reside."

Though for-profit hospitals are rare in Connecticut, Wexler said they're not that different from their nonprofit counterparts. "[Prior to working for Tenet] I spent 26 years of my career on the not-for-profit side and I've seen very few differences between either space," he said. "While some might debate this, I feel that the stakes are higher in the investor-run space, especially for an organization as large as Tenet Healthcare. Issues that occur in our hospitals, if not handled properly, become national news."

Yet, some in Connecticut remain skeptical of for-profit hospitals. Tenet's decision to end its expansion to Connecticut came 10 days after the state Office of Health Care Access proposed setting strict controls over Tenet's staffing, services and pricing at Waterbury Hospital as a condition of approving its application to buy the hospital.

In a statement posted on its website in December, Tenet said, "The extensive list of proposed conditions to be imposed on the Waterbury Hospital transaction, which is only the first of four transactions for which we've made applications, has led us to conclude that the approach to regulatory oversight in Connecticut would not enable Tenet to operate the hospitals successfully for the benefit of all stakeholders."

Prior to that announcement Tenet's arrival in Connecticut had seemed virtually a done deal. The hospitals Tenet was acquiring would have operated in the same general area of the state as the Hartford HealthCare system, but representatives from both Tenet and Hartford HealthCare said they didn't view one another as competitors.

"[The Tenet Hospitals] are all hospitals that we have collaborated with and collectively served the community with for many, many decades, and we anticipate building and strength-

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ening those collaborations," said Jeff Flaks, chief operating officer of Hartford HealthCare. He added, "In Connecticut we're very fortunate to have a climate, from a healthcare standpoint, where all of the organizations work closely together and do collaborate and do work for the benefit of the patients we serve."

James Blazar, chief strategy officer for Hartford HealthCare, said that the system has been able to improve patient care by sharing best practices, streamlining patient data and working together in different specialties. At the same time, the organization has been able to reduce costs by eliminating "redundancy of management and finding places we can streamline purchasing streams."

Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, which opened in Torrington in 1916, is an independent hospital in the process of figuring out where it fits in Connecticut's collectivized hospital landscape. Though the hospital is doing well financially, officials are carefully weighing the institution's options.

"We are one of the few remaining independent hospitals in Connecticut [and] in February of last year we began a process to evaluate that status," explains Brian Mattiello, vice president of organizational development. As part of that process, the hospital has met with the major hospital groups in Connecticut to see what a partnership might look like. The committee has also looked at remaining independent and the feasibility of that route.

Mattiello stresses that there is no timetable for a decision, and that the evaluation of the hospital has not been brought on by financial crisis of any kind. "We're moving forward deliberately and thoughtfully," he says. "We're not on our knees in a desperate situation asking someone to bail us out. We are approaching 100 years as an organization, and planning for health services for the long run is a much more complex equation than it ever has been. Every community hospital is facing some of these questions and [there are] many drivers behind thinking about your future and sometimes you have to predict the unpredictable."

So, as 2015 begins, a complex landscape once home to 34 independent hospitals was supposed to be transformed into one with three big-league hospital systems (Yale, Hartford and Tenet), a medium-sized system (Western Connecticut), other less pyramid-like affiliations and a handful of healthcare players that are the equivalent of free agents, like Charlotte Hungerford on the nonprofit side and Sharon on the for-profit side.

Tenet pulling out leaves more hospitals than expected with a status like a free agent in sports; it will still take joining an established franchise to stay in the game.

Or even to play at all.

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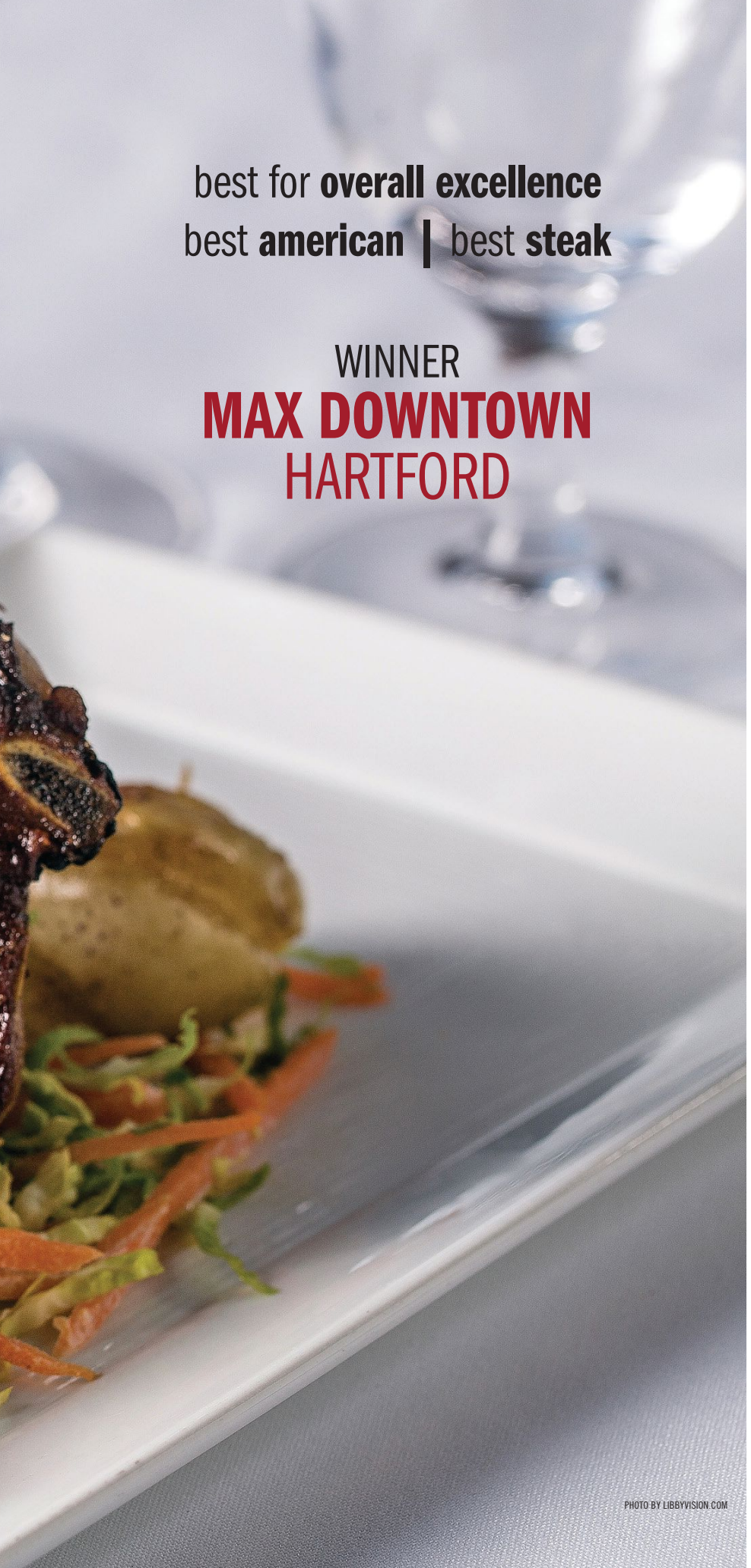
2015 BEST RESTAURANTS

★ experts' picks ★

Where are the best places to eat in Connecticut? We reached out to our readers (both online and in print) as well as a panel of local food experts for the restaurants they think are worthy of such a designation, and the response was tremendous, as always. We are delighted to share the results of both those surveys on the pages that follow, and even more excited to try and get out to visit all these terrific eateries ourselves in the year ahead. Enjoy!



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best for **overall excellence**
best **american** | best **steak**

WINNER
MAX DOWNTOWN
HARTFORD

best for **overall excellence**

WINNER MAX DOWNTOWN, HARTFORD

RUNNER-UP SAL E PEPE, NEWTOWN

best **new restaurant**

WINNER TAZZA OSTERIA & BAR, FAIRFIELD

RUNNER-UP BEAR'S SMOKEHOUSE BARBECUE, HARTFORD

best **american**

WINNER MAX DOWNTOWN, HARTFORD

RUNNER-UP LOCAL KITCHEN & BEER BAR, FAIRFIELD

best **french**

WINNER UNION LEAGUE CAFÉ, NEW HAVEN

RUNNER-UP ÀVERT BRASSERIE, WEST HARTFORD

best **italian**

WINNER GOODFELLAS RESTAURANT, NEW HAVEN

RUNNER-UP SAL E PEPE, NEWTOWN

best **asian**

WINNER FENG ASIAN BISTRO, HARTFORD

RUNNER-UP KAWA NI, WESTPORT

best **mexican**

WINNER PUERTA VALLARTA, MIDDLETOWN

RUNNER-UP BODEGA, FAIRFIELD

best **latin american**

WINNER CRAVE, ANSONIA

RUNNER-UP VALENCIA LUNCHERIA, NORWALK

best **indian**

WINNER COROMANDEL, DARIEN

RUNNER-UP THALI, NEW HAVEN

best **middle eastern**

WINNER MAMOUN'S, NEW HAVEN

RUNNER-UP KIBBERIA, DANBURY

best **pub grub**

WINNER DEW DROP INN, DERBY

RUNNER-UP LITTLE PUB, RIDGEFIELD

best **road food**

WINNER DEW DROP INN, DERBY

RUNNER-UP SUPER DUPER WEENIE, FAIRFIELD

best **food truck**

WINNER CASEUS, NEW HAVEN

RUNNER-UP MELT MOBILE, STAMFORD

best **bistro**

WINNER LUC'S, RIDGEFIELD

RUNNER-UP BAR BOUCHÉE, MADISON

best **seafood**

WINNER MAX FISH, GLASTONBURY

RUNNER-UP WESTBROOK LOBSTER, CLINTON

best **steak**

WINNER MAX DOWNTOWN, HARTFORD

RUNNER-UP J. GILBERT'S, GLASTONBURY

best **prime rib**

WINNER CARMEN ANTHONY, WATERBURY

RUNNER-UP WHITE HORSE COUNTRY PUB, WASHINGTON

best **burgers**

WINNER MAX BURGER, WEST HARTFORD

RUNNER-UP PLAN B BURGER BAR, GLASTONBURY

JULIE BIDWELL

best **new restaurant** | best **appetizers**

WINNER

TAZZA OSTERIA & BAR

FAIRFIELD

best **vegetarian** | best **lunch**

WINNER

HEIRLOOM FOOD COMPANY

DANIELSON

JULIE BIDWELL

best **barbecue**

WINNER BEAR'S SMOKEHOUSE BARBECUE, HARTFORD

RUNNER-UP WALRUS + CARPENTER, BRIDGEPORT

best **romantic**

WINNER GOODFELLAS RESTAURANT, NEW HAVEN

RUNNER-UP L'ORCIO, NEW HAVEN

best **family dining**

WINNER SBC RESTAURANT & BREWERY, MILFORD

RUNNER-UP WESTBROOK LOBSTER, CLINTON

best **breakfast**

WINNER CHIPS, FAIRFIELD

RUNNER-UP HARVEST, SIMSBURY

best **brunch**

WINNER WATER'S EDGE RESORT & SPA, WESTBROOK

RUNNER-UP MAX FISH, GLASTONBURY

best **lunch**

WINNER HEIRLOOM FOOD COMPANY, DANIELSON

RUNNER-UP BEAR'S SMOKEHOUSE BARBECUE, HARTFORD

best **appetizers**

WINNER TAZZA OSTERIA & BAR, FAIRFIELD

RUNNER-UP BARCELONA, WEST HARTFORD

best **desserts**

WINNER THE WHELK, WESTPORT

RUNNER-UP MATCH, NORWALK

best **outdoor dining**

WINNER GOODFELLAS RESTAURANT, NEW HAVEN

RUNNER-UP L'ORCIO, NEW HAVEN

| CONTINUED ON **PAGE 66** |

best restaurants 2015 **experts' picks**

experts' pick: best for **overall excellence**

Arethusa al tavolo, Bantam

"It's the type of sparkling, happy and casual-but-sophisticated wine bar/restaurant you might find in Milan, say, with models from runway shows and financiers salted among travelers savvy enough to find *the* place to eat. Executive chef Dan Magill's food is fabulous, as are the wines by the glass."

Douglas P. Clement, *Connecticut Magazine* Verticals Editor

JULIE BIDWELL

Get ready to bite into the restaurants judged the best of the best in Connecticut by our "experts," who range from veteran restaurant critics and food writers to contemporary bloggers who track the trends—and hottest, newest places—along with cookbook authors and even a former restaurant owner. Joined by some food-savvy *Connecticut Magazine* editors, it's a group for which dining is a passion—and dining at the best places is an art that takes constantly having a collective finger on the pulse of the Connecticut dining scene. Together, our Readers' Choice and Experts' Picks provide a comprehensive view of the state's tastiest places to eat well.

experts' picks: best for **overall excellence**

Union League Café, New Haven
Arethusa al tavolo, Bantam
Max Downtown, Hartford
Winvian, Morris
Olio, Stamford
South End, New Canaan
Bailey's Backyard, Ridgefield
LeFarm, Westport
Bernard's & Sara's Wine Bar, Ridgefield
Thomas Henkelmann, Greenwich
West Street Grill, Litchfield

experts' picks: best **new restaurant**

A'Vert Brasserie, West Hartford
Moxie, Madison
Kawa Ni, Westport
Viron Rondo Osteria, Cheshire
Washington Prime, Norwalk
Jojoto, Branford
Muse by Jonathan Cartwright, Washington
Paloma, Stamford
Tarry Lodge, New Haven
NIXS, Hartford
Ceviche, Middlebury
Ted's Montana Grill, Hartford
Red 36, Mystic

experts' picks: best **italian**

Carbone's, Hartford
Bin 100, Milford
Treva, West Hartford
Bricco, Glastonbury, West Hartford
Cavey's, Manchester
Rustica, Chester
Bar Sugo, Norwalk
Upper Crust Trattoria, New Milford
Cotto Wine Bar, Stamford
Locali, New Canaan
Goodfellas, New Haven

experts' picks: best **american**

Firebox, Hartford
West Street Grill, Litchfield
Char, Greenwich
The Schoolhouse at Cannondale, Wilton
The Spread, South Norwalk
Match, South Norwalk
Millwright's, Simsbury
Community Table, Washington
Good News Café, Woodbury
Metro Bis, Simsbury

experts' pick: best **italian**

Cotto Wine Bar, Stamford

"I'm always searching for Italian restaurants that will remind me of being in Italy. Cotto Wine Bar is run by Romans who import the best cured meats and cheeses, and have a big wine list representing all of the regions of Italy. And they bake an excellent pizza."

Elizabeth Keyser, food writer

experts' picks: best french

Union League Café, New Haven
Luc's Café, Ridgefield
Thomas Henkelmann, Greenwich
Da Pietro, Westport
Ondine, Danbury
Le Petit Café, Branford

experts' picks: best **mexican/latin american**

Iguanas Ranas Taqueria, Middletown
Brasitas, Norwalk, Wilton
Valencia Luncheria, Norwalk
Bajas, Orange
Casa Villa, Stamford
Besita, West Hartford
Mezon, Danbury
Bodega, Fairfield

experts' picks: best **indian**

Thali, Ridgefield, New Haven
Kolam, Newtown
Chaat House, West Haven
Coromandel, Stamford, Darien, South Norwalk, Southport, Orange, Newtown

experts' picks: best **asian**

Feng's Asian Bistro, Hartford
Wafu Asian Bistro, Southport
Mecha Noodle Bar, Fairfield
Thai Delight, Newtown
Clinton's Taste of China, Clinton
Kawa Ni, Westport

experts' picks: best **pub**

Cask Republic, Stamford, New Haven
The Rustic Café, East Lyme
Little Barn, Westport
Bidwell Tavern, Coventry
The Hideaway, Ridgefield
Dew Drop Inn, Derby
Geno's Grille, Storrs
The Engine Room, Mystic
White Horse Country Pub, Washington
Republic, Bloomfield

experts' picks: best **craft beer haven**

Local, South Norwalk
Little Pub, Ridgefield, Wilton
Walrus + Carpenter, Bridgeport
Eli Cannon's Tap Room, Middletown
Cask Republic, Stamford, New Haven
The Engine Room, Mystic
Coalhouse Pizza, Stamford
The Ginger Man, Norwalk
Willimantic Brewing Co., Willimantic
Craft 260, Fairfield
MiKro, Hamden

experts' picks: best **cocktails**

Crown 116, New Haven
Ordinary, New Haven
Dish Bar & Grill, Hartford
Match, South Norwalk
ON20, Hartford
Bailey's Backyard, Ridgefield
Geronimo, New Haven, Fairfield

experts' pick: best **craft beer haven**

Walrus + Carpenter, Bridgeport

"Casual hotspot that manages to be more bar than restaurant without having a pub vibe. Their cocktail program, originally created by Adam Patrick (now bar manager at Match in SoNo) has been taken over by Sean Nye (previously of South End) and features perfectly executed classics as well as Sean's own concoctions. They also make a barrel-aged Manhattan not to be missed. Southern comfort food like waffle iron grilled cheese with bacon and classic mac and cheese pair perfectly with a wide selection of craft beers, both on tap and in the bottle. Live music on weekends attracts a crowd."

Adeline Jessica Crites-Moore, owner, Adeline Jessica Social Media

JEFF KAUFMAN

experts' pick: best **place to eat in the bar**

Good News Café, Woodbury

"Order Miss Peggy's Crispy Onion Bundle or "Adult" Baked Macaroni and Cheese with Lobster."

Susan Purdy, cookbook author, with Cassandra Purdy, chef/caterer

experts' picks: best **place to eat in the bar**

- **Post 154,** Westport
- **South End,** New Canaan
- **Good News Café,** Woodbury
- **Bar Bouchée,** Madison
- **Kotobuki,** Stamford
- **116 Crown,** New Haven
- **Rooftop 120,** Glastonbury
- **Union League Café,** New Haven
- **Heirloom,** The Study at Yale, New Haven

experts' picks: best **barbecue**

- **Bear's Smokehouse Barbecue,** Hartford
- **Walrus + Carpenter,** Bridgeport
- **Bobby Q's,** Westport
- **The Cookhouse,** New Milford
- **Dinosaur Bar-b-que,** Stamford
- **Chester's Barbecue,** Groton

experts' picks: best **tapas**

- **Barcelona,** Stamford, Norwalk, Fairfield, New Haven
- **Picador,** New Canaan
- **Ibiza,** Hamden, Danbury
- **Olea,** New Haven
- **Costa del Sol,** Hartford

experts' picks: best **steak**

- **The Capital Grille,** Stamford, Hartford
- **Morton's Steakhouse,** Hartford
- **David Burke Prime,** Foxwoods
- **Blackstones Steakhouse,** Norwalk
- **J. Gilbert's,** Glastonbury
- **Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar,** West Hartford
- **Joseph's Steakhouse,** Bridgeport

experts' picks: best **for families**

- **Rizzuto's,** West Hartford, Stamford, Bethel, Westport
- **Sesame Seed,** Danbury
- **East Side Restaurant,** New Britain
- **Glenwood Drive-In,** Hamden
- **Lenny and Joe's,** Madison
- **Wood-n-Tap,** multiple locations
- **Coriander Café,** Eastford
- **Truffles Bakery and Kitchen,** Farmington
- **Fat Cat Pie Co.,** Norwalk

JULIE BIDWELL

experts' pick: best **vegetarian/vegan**

West Street Grill, Litchfield

"Co-owner James O'Shea has an ace up his sleeve with an array of delicious vegetarian/vegan dishes, which are his own creation. Some are on the menu and some are not, but he loves to show them off. Just ask."

***Connecticut Magazine* staff**

experts' picks: most **romantic**

- **ON20,** Hartford
- **Le Petit Café,** Branford
- **Ondine,** Danbury
- **Schoolhouse at Cannondale,** Wilton
- **Artisan,** Southport
- **Winvian,** Morris
- **Paragon,** Foxwoods

experts' picks: best **desserts**

- **Schoolhouse at Cannondale,** Wilton
- **The Pantry,** Washington Depot
- **Union League Café,** New Haven
- **Community Table,** Washington
- **L'escale,** Greenwich
- **Ondine,** Danbury
- **Mama's Boy,** South Norwalk

experts' picks: best **brunch**

- **Mama's Boy,** South Norwalk
- **The Spread,** South Norwalk
- **Saybrook Point Inn,** Old Saybrook
- **Bella's Café,** New Haven
- **Fat Cat Pie Co.,** Norwalk

experts' picks: best **sushi**

- **Miya's Sushi,** New Haven
- **Toro,** Newtown
- **Yokohama,** New Milford
- **Kotobuki,** Stamford
- **Wasabi,** Orange
- **Shiki Hana,** Fairfield
- **Pink Sumo,** Westport

experts' picks: best **vegetarian/vegan**

- **Heirloom Food Company,** Danielson
- **Claire's Corner Copia,** New Haven
- **Hidden Valley Eatery,** Washington
- **It's Only Natural Restaurant,** Middletown
- **West Street Grill,** Litchfield
- **G-Zen,** Branford
- **Bloodroot,** Bridgeport
- **Back 40 Kitchen,** Greenwich
- **Organic Market,** Westport

experts' pick: best **families**

East Side Restaurant, New Britain

"For more than 70 years, families have celebrated birthdays, anniversaries and family nights out here with heaping plates of authentic German food, accordion music, whopper desserts and rollicking toasts of 'Ticky tocky, ticky tocky—hoy! Hoy! Hoy!'"

***Connecticut Magazine* Staff**

JULIE BIDWELL

experts' picks: best **outdoor dining**

Fresh Salt, Old Saybrook
Hopkins Inn, New Preston
Locali, New Canaan
Washington Prime, South Norwalk
Harlan Publick, South Norwalk
Bartaco, Westport
G.W. Tavern, Washington
Morning Glory Café, Old Lyme
Capriccio Café, Stamford
Paloma, Stamford
L'escale, Greenwich

experts' picks: best **last-minute option**

Donahue's Beach Grill, Madison
City Limits, Stamford
Dish 'n Dat, Canton
85 Main, Putnam
The Vanilla Bean Café, Pomfret
Ted's Montana Grill, Hartford

experts' pick: best **outdoor dining**

Paloma, Stamford

"Newly opened, Paloma is a beautiful spot to eat outside. Take a seat right by the water, have some fantastic cocktails, and try some of Chef Aarón Sánchez's Mexican-inspired cuisine to while away the perfect day."

Dan and Kristien Del Ferraro, OmNomCT

experts' picks: best **undiscovered treasure**

Ichiro, Danbury
Staropolska, New Britain
The Blue Oar, Haddam
Basso Café, Norwalk
Olio, Stamford
Ruuthai's Kitchen, Bridgeport
Eren's Grill, Fairfield (Greenfield Hill)
RSVP, West Cornwall

experts' picks: best **seafood**

Fresh Salt, Old Saybrook
F.I.S.H., Stamford
The Oyster Club, Mystic
Max's Oyster Bar, West Hartford
The Whelk, Westport
Stowe's, West Haven
Muse by Jonathan Cartwright, Washington
Gaspar's, New London
S&P Oyster House, Mystic
Acqua, Westport

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Culinary queen of New Haven: Claire Criscuolo celebrates a decade of Basta Trattoria and 40 years of her Corner Copia.

BY DOUGLAS P. CLEMENT

Claire's Corner Empire

CLAIRE CRISCUOLO'S "OTHER RESTAURANT," BASTA TRATTORIA, TURNS 10.

It's impossible to tell the story of Basta Trattoria and its 10th anniversary on the best stretch of Chapel Street in New Haven—across from the atmospheric stone and ivy of Yale University and within the shadow of Yale's world-class art museums—without also telling the story of owner Claire Criscuolo and her legendary vegetarian and vegan restaurant next door, Claire's Corner Copia.

Basta has so many charms all its own, and ultimately the reason you'll want to discover this intimately sized gem that opened on New Year's Eve in 2004 is the delicious food that's "authentic Italian with a modern twist."

Basta has an extensive menu of favorite dishes, the ingredients are the freshest organic and sustainable ones available and everything is cooked to order. Those attributes are gilded by the fact that you can dine happily at different levels of immersion and price points, but more on that later.

The principal aria on the menu—to borrow a term from opera—which richly, lyrically brings Basta's narrative into focus is something called Italian Sunday dinner: "The traditional Sunday dinner of our past. Anonna's tender meatball, Italian sausage and eggplant rolatini served in our San Marzano tomato sauce with penne pasta."

My wife and I had dinner at Basta on a cold, rainy Saturday night in early December. Walking into the warm, well-lit restaurant instantly countered the night's chill. After we chose a wine from the small but well-appointed list—Villa Remotti Barbera d'Asti, a bright, full-bodied artisanal red from Piedmont—and selected appetizers, there was no stopping her from ordering the Italian Sunday dinner.

That was putting chef Eduardo Saldana-Peña on the spot. My wife's heritage goes back to Sicily (via her grandfather) and Naples (her grandmother), by way of Queens. As a child she went to Sunday dinners at their house on Woodhaven, Queens—an experience she began rhapsodizing about at Basta, recalling the aromas of that Sunday meal emanating from the house.

The verdict on Basta's rendition of a sacred Italian feast?

Saldana-Peña's version of Italian Sunday Dinner left my wife "transported" back to those authentic meals of her youth, when pasta got dressed in Sunday "gravy," never "sauce," and garlic was at the heart of almost everything. The massive meatball—Basta is known for its meatballs, which can be added to any pasta dish—was moist and sublimely flavorful, and she especially loved the sausage, later declaring that the eggplant rollatini was the star of the dish. (As for portions, they're generous enough that we split the leftovers for dinner the next night.)

My wife had begun with the Basta Salad—organic mixed baby greens, gorgonzola cheese, seasonal fruit, dried cranberries, toasted almonds and limoncello vinaigrette. It's a beautiful, massive salad bursting with perfectly married fresh flavors, and it could

ALL PHOTOS, THIS SPREAD, PETER HVIZDAK

be a meal alone by adding chicken, shrimp or salmon and a glass of crisp Italian white wine.

A similarly tempting dish for applying the basta principal to Basta—the word is Italian for enough—is the Roasted Clams "Zuppa," which consists of cockle clams pan-roasted with San Marzano tomatoes in a white wine and an herb broth, and accompanied by (big) garlic crostini and friselle (twice-baked bread) croutons. (Add a glass of wine to the Roasted Clams "Zuppa," and with the salad the meal would total something in the neighborhood of just $50.)

Or try that approach with Anonna's Meatballs as a stand-alone dish: "Handmade and tender, with a touch of Parmesan cheese, just like Anonna made. Served in our warm San Marzano tomato sauce with caramelized onions and our locally produced hand-packed ricotta."

Basta is basta in every way, and while it's tempting to keep things simple, it's more tempting to make the experience special by indulging in the spirit of the old Italian families making Sunday dinner a long, lingering feast.

It's an experience you can craft in so many different delicious ways, which is impressive given Basta's commitment to ingredients so fresh that "a freezer would not be necessary."

Appetizers range from Sicilian calamari (with hot cherry pepper) and arugula bruschetta with locally-produced Scamoza cheese to mussels and clams Pernod, and polenta with San Marzano tomato sauce, Grana Padano cheese and white truffle oil. Besides the Basta Salad others include a Caesar, a Capresi and one featuring baby arugula and organic tomatoes.

Entrées are too voluminous to fit into a single category; it takes four to cover them all: Pastas and Other Italian Favorites, Pollo (chicken), Carne (meat) and Pesce (fish).

There's favorites like chicken Parmesan—but it's important to note (and apply this ethos to all of the other dishes) that it's free-range chicken sautéed and topped with house-made basil-scented marinara, locally produced fresh mozzarella and Grana Padano cheese, and ultimately baked in the woodburning oven.

. . . while it's tempting to keep things simple, it's more tempting to make the experience special by digging in the spirit of the old Italian families making Sunday dinner a long, lingering feast.

The longest list is the pastas, which extend from simple Penne Pomodoro and Penne alla Vodka to the more operatic Gamberi Carbonara: "Our homemade pappardelle pasta with wild-caught jumbo shrimp braised in a light cream and egg sauce with pancetta, peas and a little Parmesan."

Linguine with clams (sautéed with garlic, parsley and EVOO, with white wine and house seafood stock) shows up under Pesce, and there too one finds the must-have Zuppa di Pesce, with jumbo wild shrimp, PEI mussels, cockle clams, New England wild diver scallops and calamari, served over housemade friselle, garlic crostini or linguini. Like Italian Sunday dinner, that's a classic dish that has perfection written all over it.

The steaks in the Carne section are Piedmontese beef, and the one topped with sautéed organic mushrooms in a light marsala cream sauce, and finished with white truffle oil, sounded delicious. I went with the special, a steak decorated with sautéed sea scallops and accompanied by a light risotto and escarole. (It's such a joy that authentic Italian food reflects the appeal of bitterness.) The steak was a medium-rare gem and the scallops offered a nice sweetness that parried with the richness of the beef, and all of it went great with the Barbera.

Save room for dessert because the tiramisu is awesome, and you might be lucky enough to be at Basta on a night when the cake is Claire's legendary Lithuanian coffeecake.

The fact that Basta is turning 10 this Dec. 31 is "sad but wonderful," Claire says. The wonderful part is obvious, the sad part is the anniversary happening without her husband, Frank, here to see it. He died on Dec. 14, 2011.

Way back when she was a nurse and he was a musician, and after marrying they opened the legendary vegetarian restaurant Claire's Corner Copia on Sept. 17, 1975. "He wanted meat," Claire says over coffee one morning in December, reflecting on her path as a pioneering chef and restaurant owner in Connecticut. "He would escape to Louis' Lunch."

At one point, the Basta space was a Willoughby's coffee shop. When it prepared to move, Claire was offered the space and had 24 hours to decide. She called Frank, who worried about the size and asked a series of questions to troubleshoot the plan to expand with a second restaurant. Claire's answer to all of them was, "It will be enough."

So the name of the new trattoria had to be Basta.

According to Basta's website, Frank "dreamed of Basta for decades, wanting to run a sweet little Italian trattoria just like the ones he and Claire visited in Amalfi, Atrani, Ravello, Capri, and Vietri [in] Italy. A little restaurant using only the finest, freshest organic and sustainable ingredients, so fresh that a freezer would not be necessary."

"All of your food here at Basta Trattoria is

cooked fresh to order," the site says. "If organic zucchini is our vegetable for the night, then we cut it only when you order it—we do take freshness very seriously—you are worth it! This takes longer, but we promise that you'll notice the difference."

We can vouch for that; now you must go and discover for yourself.

Basta is open from 5 to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, from noon to 3 p.m. and 5 to 10 p.m. on Saturday, and from 1 to 9 p.m. on Sunday. For reservations, call (203) 772-1715. 1006 Chapel St., New Haven, bastatrattoria.com.

Claire's Iconic Corner Copia Is 40 and Going Strong

Here's what the website for Claire's Corner Copia says:

Claire LaPia and Frank Criscuolo were married on February 22, 1975. Claire was a registered nurse and Frank was a musician who played base and lead guitar. Deeply in love, they wanted to be together as much as possible and working together was the way to accomplish that goal. Claire loved to cook and while they were both raised in traditional Italian-American families, each in a family of really good cooks and bakers, Claire's mother, Anna Bigio LaPia was "obsessed" with eating delicious, fresh foods, homemade food, with lots of fruits and vegetables, grains and beans. "Eat this, it's good for you" and "We don't eat foods with ingredients I can't pronounce" were her mantras. Claire wanted to cook that way for the masses and she and Frank believed and still believe that eating well really is the best defense against illness and disease. Today, scientific research supports that theory. Mother was right!

Claire and Frank Criscuolo opened Claire's Corner Copia on September 17, 1975.

We are so proud of the way we conduct our business, of our brilliant staff, our beloved community, and of YOU, the people who support this mission of ours, this crazy experiment that started out with two people in love wanting to bring real food to lots of people, while supporting a community. Thank you and Bless You for letting us realize our dream and for allowing us to do what we love for more than three decades!

In the process of realizing the dream Claire Criscuolo has become legendary in the food world, with one recent honor coming July 18 at the Winvian resort in Morris, where she received the Organic Leadership Award from NOFA (New England Organic Food Association) for her support of organic farmers.

Criscuolo told guests that her devotion to eating well through food with integrity began early, with advice from her mother: "Never cheat your stomach." In remarks that railed against the use of pesticides and fungicides on food products, she urged her audience to help raise the profile of, and demand for, everything organic, and said at one point, "We do not 'play' at Claire's [when it comes to pure food]. We are hardcore."

In her hands, hardcore has always also meant delicious—at Claire's Corner Copia and at her Basta Trattoria next door, the realization of a longtime dream of Criscuolo's late husband, Frank, who died in December 2011.

When Livability.com named New Haven the country's Top Foodie City of 2014, among the restaurants singled out was Claire's Corner Copia, which on top of being vegetarian and delicious is also certified kosher.

We sat down with Claire over coffee recently and were reminded of the secret of her success. It goes far deeper than pioneering vegetarian food made with organic local ingredients—it goes all the way down the well of integrity to a core value that's referenced on the Claire's website: "Our bottom line is people, and when you care about people, you want to feed them real food."

Claire doesn't just say it, she lives it. As she begins telling the Claire's story—"I said [to Frank], 'Let's open a restaurant' . . ."—someone comes into the restaurant and Claire pauses to greet them. "As soon as we came here, I was like, 'This is the place.'" It had two doors [one on each street] and good feng shui.

More people stop to chat, and a member of her staff brings a latte and gives her a hug.

Before Claire's Corner Copia arrived, the spot at the corner of College and Chapel streets was a caramel corn shop and the space was controlled by Fred DeLuca of Subway fame.

Claire recalls selling the copper bowl for popping the corn to get a stove. Back then the Basta space next door was a jewelry store.

"It just worked out," she says of Claire's. "People were happy to be in on this crazy idea [to make good food and to make a profit]."

Early on she helped the homeless by feeding them, but her husband, who oversaw the business side of the operation, told her to think of her other customers. "Frank said, 'Find a shelter you can help, but you can't be the shelter.'"

Claire, who is known for her constant caring and philanthropy, has a new idea about how to grow—not her business, necessarily, but how to help more people and the world around her.

"I want to do manufacturing," Claire says. "We could do our dry mixes." She wants to create a line of Claire's products people could use to make delicious things with integrity at home, and she wants to do it mainly to create local jobs.

Serendipitously, someone from Whole Foods approached her a while ago and raised the same idea. Developing the project is on hiatus, but it seems like it will happen. "I think that will be the next thing," Claire says.

ALL PHOTOS, THIS PAGE: PETER HVIZDAK

BY MIKE LAUTERBORN

Craft 260 a New Gem for Craft Beer, Upscale Comfort Food, Great Burgers

Craft 260 Beer Bar/Bistro is a new restaurant player in Fairfield, pouring on the flavor and serving extraordinary beers and bourbons. We pulled up a bar stool recently next to two of its three owners, Tomer Raviv and chef Vinny Mascaro, to tap into their vision and explore the menu.

Tomer, 32, moved to the U.S. from Israel in 2003 to help his brother open a restaurant in West Hartford. The experience taught him much of what he needed to know about the industry.

Tomer met Mascaro, 37, four years ago and began working with him at an eatery on Fairfield's Black Rock Turnpike. Raised in New Haven, Mascaro graduated from the

University of New Haven with a culinary arts degree and has worked as a chef ever since. Mascaro says his inspiration is his grandmother, Josephine. "I would pull up a chair next to her at the stove learning and cooking as far back as I can remember," he said.

The two became friendly with Kosta Proskinitopoulos, 45, a Greek émigré, who was a cook initially and an electrician. He was a customer of the eatery and soon became their business partner.

"We became the A Team, putting our skills together," says Mascaro.

In 2013, the trio decided to find a space together elsewhere in the Fairfield community, where Tomer and Mascaro had built a loyal following. They contracted for the current space, which had been a Thai restaurant, in Sept. 2013, and spent five months refurbishing it. "Kosta guided the renovation while Tomer and I shared input and helped with the build-out. It was a team effort and made the process very special," said Mascaro.

Craft 260 officially opened in mid-February 2014, packing rustic and old school industrial accents into a 2,800-square-foot floor plan. These include vintage wood trim and displays, Edison lights, framed black-and-white photos of Americana, iron table bases, railroad ties as bar foot rests and shelving made of iron pipes.

To capitalize on the craft beer movement in America, the trio decided to not only offer unique beers but make the most use of beer throughout the menu as well.

On draft you can find such stars as Two Roads Brewery's Worker's Comp, New England Brewing's Gandhi Bot double IPA and OEC's Solaris Wild Ale. Eleven different drafts are offered at a time and the lineup constantly changes. Below deck, 40 different brands of beer in bottles or cans await, including Oskar Blues' Dale's Pale Ale, Delirium Tremens Belgian pale ale and Old Rasputin' Russian imperial stout.

Up on the shelf, you'll spot great bourbons like Elijah Craig 23-year-old, Pinhook small batch and Eagle Rare.

Scanning the menu, you'll see these libations popping up in some of the most popular dishes. Among Small Plates, which run $9 to $14, a favorite is the heavenly sinful Southern Fried Bacon—thick slices of bacon battered and fried crispy and drizzled with bourbon and real maple syrup reduction. Or the Beer Brussels—beer-soaked Brussels sprouts prepared with roasted garlic, goat cheese, smoked tomato and bourbon ketchup.

The column marked "Handheld" refers to burgers and sandwiches, which are tagged at between $11 and $15, note the Craft 260 Burger. Picture eight ounces of fresh ground short rib blend beef (fire-grilled), eight-hour caramelized onions, smoked tomatoes, crispy pork belly, IPA Vermont cheddar sauce and roasted garlic aioli on a brioche bun.

You can also get real comfortable with one of several entrées, dubbed "Meals," which price between $15 and $25. From a Baked Mac & Cheese and New England Pot Pie to a Down South marinated Cornish hen and 14-ounce Hanger Steak, there's something to satisfy.

In the Wood Oven Flatbreads section, at $11-$14, get happy with the Salad pie, made with baby kale, roasted fennel, roasted eggplant, marinated tomatoes, shaved red onions, pecorino and extra virgin olive oil.

Looking for something leaner? Try some "Greens" (priced at $12 on average), like the Sonoma Salad, with baby Mesclun, dried cranberries, Mandarin oranges, red onions, goat cheese, grilled chicken, crispy rice noodles, brown sugar pecans and Chardonnay vinaigrette.

A dozen red and white wines, signature cocktail expressions such as the Ring of Fire, and dessert offerings like the to-die-for S'Mores, round out the menu.

"We are about upscale comfort food with a twist," said Mascaro. "Our dishes will evoke a memory of childhood or a certain life moment and we'll open your eyes and tastebuds to alternatives to traditional beer and bourbon."

[Editor's note: This story also appears in the holiday issue of *Fairfield County Life* magazine, a publication of Minuteman Newspapers.]

(203) 955-1745. Craft260.com Hours: Mon. 4:30 p.m. for dinner; Tue.–Fri. 11:30 a.m.–late; Sat. & Sun. 12:30 p.m.–late.

Great additions to our rich dining landscape

3 New Dining Destinations

Kawa Ni

When chef Bill Taibe opened LeFarm in 2009, he earned acclaim for the ever-changing menu that utilizes seasonably available ingredients. In 2012, he continued that success with The Whelk, which specializes in seafood. When the opportunity arose to open a third restaurant in Westport, Taibe didn't want to duplicate his other efforts.

"[We thought] let's try something completely different and challenge ourselves," he recalls.

That something different is **Kawa Ni**, a restaurant inspired by the culture and cuisine of Japan because, "It's a food that I love, and a tradition and a culture that I admire so much," says Taibe. "I wanted to see what we could do with it and kind of have fun with it and learn."

After deciding to open a Japanese restaurant, Taibe took a two-week trip to the Land of the Rising Sun. "When I went out to Japan, I fell in love with the concept of the Izakaya, which is really like their pub—you drink sake, drink beer; it's essentially like a tapas bar in Spain," he says.

He decided to recreate that vibe at Kawa Ni ("on the river") in Westport. The high-end but casual establishment serves up a variety of traditional Japanese dishes as well as creative new takes on Japanese cuisine. True to the spirit of the Izakaya, there is a full bar with a growing sake program and variety of specialty cocktails that Taibe describes as "bits of America meets Far East with beers to match."

The must-try dish that has emerged at the restaurant so far is the various ramens (noodle soups).

"We're just falling in love with the art of ramen and these big brothy soups," Taibe says. He adds that if you come to Kawa Ni people generally grab a side dish then "gravitate towards having a big bowl of noodles."

Just don't expect the standard Japanese-American dining experience at Kawa Ni. "It's so different from what Japanese restaurants are in suburban America—the hibachis and teriyaki—that's not what we do at all and not really what Japanese food is," Taibe says.

Taibe adds that even beyond the menu Kawa Ni has a flavor that is distinct from Le Farm and The Whelk. "It's different than the other two restaurants—it's fun and about more than just sitting and eating."

(203) 557-8775, kawaniwestport.com

Born of Connecticut's beloved da Capo family with restaurants in Litchfield and Avon, Viron Rondo has stepped out on his own and opened **Viron Rondo Osteria** in Cheshire. While the new restaurant is officially not related to the Italian powerhouse, Rondo managed the da Capo Restaurant Group beginning in 2007, raising it to prominence.

In Italy, an osteria is "a place to share food with friends and family," and that's precisely what Rondo and his team have set out to create in Cheshire. The seasonal market-driven menu is full of Italian classics plus new dishes. You may recognize a few items from da Capo's menu, like "My Mother's Chips," eggplant and zucchini chips with a cucumber yogurt dip, and the Brick Roasted Chicken, organic chicken, potato purée, sautéed brussels sprouts and au jus. That might seem strange considering the restaurant isn't part of the da Capo chain, but in this case it's just an opportunity for people in the south of the state to try some delicious food.

Viron Rondo Osteria

Pasta here comes nearly any way you want it, from Penne Vodka with marinara, sun-dried tomatoes, cream and Grana Padano to Vongole with whole clams, garlic and white wine. Or maybe you like Sole Mio with fresh mozzarella, pepperoni, grape tomatoes, marinara and capers or the seafood bounty that is frutti di Mare. The theme is locally sourced, fresh ingredients. As they proclaim on their website, "Of course it should go without saying that our free-range chicken, organic salmon, fresh mozzarella, home-made pasta and artisanal breads and cheeses are complemented with key ingredients imported direct from Italy." And they're mindful of dietary restrictions offering a gluten-free menu including whole-wheat dough pizzas and pastas made from a blend of corn and rice.

On the website, Rondo says, "I look back at my time at da Capo fondly for while I was there, my customers became my dearest friends. Their lives became part of mine."

He now aspires to do that for the customers of Viron Rondo Osteria. "To my friends, I look forward to the honor of having you back to my table," he says. "If you are new to me, when you visit please introduce yourself so that I may have the pleasure of welcoming you, personally."

(203) 439-2727, vironrondoosteria.com

TOP PHOTO: LAUREN SANTAGATA

Mystic has gained fame for its relationship with the sea, so opening a waterside restaurant to capitalize on that connection seems like a recipe for success. The real challenge is actually taking that premise and making it work on a daily basis.

Enter Angela Kanabis, who has run acclaimed local favorites such as Mystic's Bravo, Bravo and Kazu as well as Olio in Groton. Relying on that expertise and capitalizing on a terrific location tucked away on the water alongside Seaport Marine, Kanabis has opened **Red 36**, named for the red buoy that marks the starboard side of the channel when approached from the sea. Consequently, it's the quintessential seaside eatery—think wide wooden decks, sturdy picnic tables and platters of fresh seafood.

"Red 36 offers a relaxed and inviting atmosphere with beautiful riverfront views," says Kanabis. "The outdoor decks offer classic dining tables, lounge areas or Adirondack chairs, ideal for watching the sailboats float past."

Since opening in July, the 150-seat eatery has been drawing crowds eager to taste summer. In addition to plenty of bounty from the

deep—an ample raw bar, fried oysters, fish tacos, lump crabcakes, lobster roll, beer-battered fish and chips, clam chowder—the menu boasts a mouthwatering array of grilled flatbreads (such as clam with bacon, kale, garlic, oregano, Parmesan and olive oil), gourmet burgers (the beef short rib Angus ground beef burger comes with double Gloucester cheese, butter lettuce and vine-ripened tomato) and upscale entrées such as cashew-crusted pork tenderloin and seared tuna. Red 36 also offers homemade condiments and freshly baked rolls.

The dessert menu changes daily—one of the more popular treats recently was a scrumptious caramel-covered popcorn sundae. The drink menu features more than a dozen craft beers as well as a delicious blend of domestic and imported wines and creative cocktails.

According to Kanabis, Red 36 will continue to evolve, adding live music on Thursdays and Sundays, private theme dinners and a Bloody Mary bar on Sunday afternoons. She adds that Red 36 is not just a summer destination. "We are committed to creating an enjoyable and quality experience for our guests throughout the year."

(860) 536-3604, red36ct.com

BY ERIK OFGANG

Market Place, A Danbury Farm-to-Table Hotspot, Opens New Location in Woodbury

Diners in the market for farm-to-table options will have a reason to graze at Market Place Woodbury, a locally sourced, seasonally appropriate restaurant that opened last November on Main Street South in Woodbury.

The new restaurant seeks to build on the reputation of the original Market Place Kitchen & Bar in Danbury, which opened two years ago and has been attracting foodies ever since. Danbury's menu is locally sourced and changes seasonally to reflect available ingredients. Woodbury will go with the same local-is-best formula.

"It's the same concept as Danbury. We're all farm-to-table, it's all organic. All our meats are antibiotic and hormone-free, our beef is also grass-fed," explains Brian Gernant who served as Danbury's general manager since it opened and is now working in the same role in Woodbury. Gernant adds, "It's the same menu as Danbury—we're offering our winter menu in both locations."

Joseph Lucci was the original chef at the Danbury location, but recently Alex Rowe took over as the restaurant's head chef. In Woodbury, the head chef is Steven Scarzella, who has previously worked at the Mayflower Grace in Washington.

One highlight from the fall menu Scarzella created for guests in Woodbury is a special crispy Brussels sprout dish made with pumpkin aioli, mozzarella burrata with a balsamic drizzle, served over bruschetta di palma. Desserts include Pumpkin Cheesecake (with cranberry compote, amaretti cookie crumbs and pumpkin gelato), and Apple Cinnamon Sundae, which is gluten-free and features oatmeal-raisin cookies, cinnamon-whipped cream, crushed toffee, malt powder and apple cinnamon gelato.

Winter offerings include blackened chicken nachos (made with blue corn tortillas, Vermont white cheddar, hot cherry peppers, caramelized onions, arugula, truffle aioli and avocado-tomato salsa) and Hudson Valley Duck Breast (featuring duck from New York state topped with cauliflower crème, wheat berries, cranberry compote, and pear reduction).

Beyond the food, Gernant says people will be drawn by the ambience and staff's dedication to service. "The barn building that we moved into just fits our whole motif exactly," he says. "It's just the whole total package from top to bottom. I'm always hands on, I'm always on the floor."

The bar at Market Place also features an extensive wine, beer and cocktail list. There are 30 different wines offered by the glass and 12 draft beer lines, which offers a rotating list of craft beer. Past on-tap offerings have included beers from Two Roads, Captain Lawrence and Blue Point. As far as cocktails go, Gernant says, "We have a pumpkin martini—a pumpkintini with a cinnamon sugar rim. It's unbelievable how well it sells. And we have 'Brian's Secret Sangria' [named for Gernant], we can't keep it in the house."

Fans of the original Market Place are excited by the brand's expansion and Gernant says it will offer something unique in the Woodbury area. "I've opened seven restaurants," he says. "I've never had a buzz like we've had opening up. Three months ago the phones started ringing in Danbury. The town is very excited for it and so are we."

Market Place Woodbury is located at 641 Main Street South, Woodbury. (203) 586-1215, marketplacewoodbury.com.

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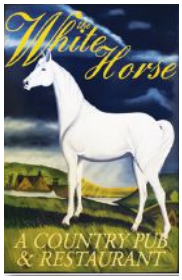

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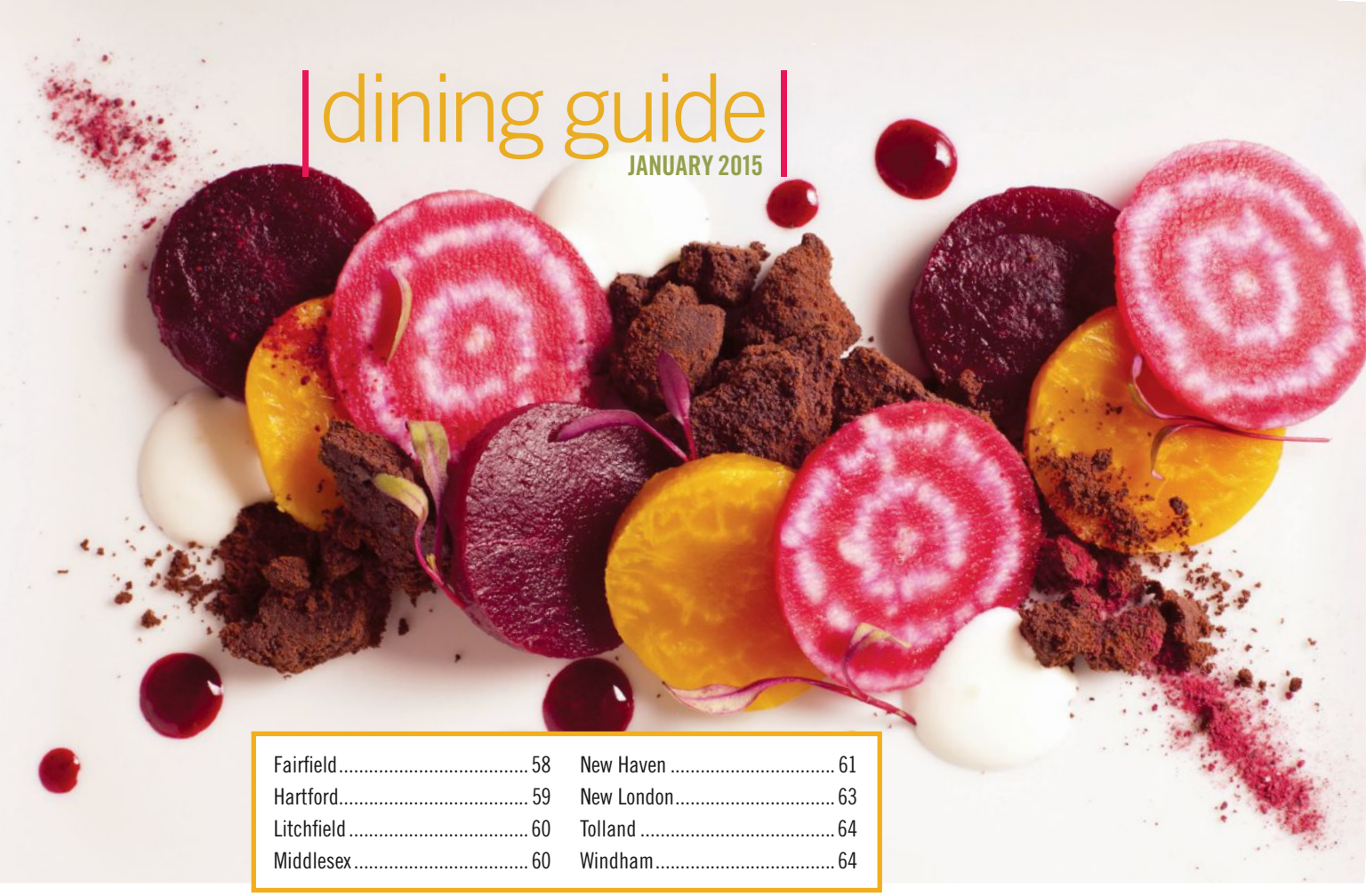

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Fairfield County

Artisan • ***New England*** A farm-to-table restaurant with New England-inspired seasonal cuisine. • 275 Old Post Rd., Southport, (203) 259-2800 (artisansouthport.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Barcelona Restaurant & Wine Bar • ***Spanish Mediterranean*** Cutting-edge restaurant serving Spanish and Mediterranean cuisine. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 63-65 North Main St., South Norwalk, (203) 899-0088; 18 West Putnam Ave., Greenwich, (203) 983-6400; 4180 Black Rock Tpke., Fairfield, (203) 255-0800; 222 Summer St., Stamford, (203) 348-4800 (barcelonawinebar.com). Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

Bernard's • ***French*** Consistently serving perfectly executed seasonal entrées in an elegant country setting. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 20 West La., Ridgefield, (203) 438-8282 (bernardsridgefield.com). Closed Mon. L (Tues.-Sun.) D SB, $$$, E, WA

Bloodroot • ***Vegetarian*** Offers a seasonal menu that might include Vietnamese summer rolls, the Bloodroot burger and Mexican mole. • 85 Ferris St., Bridgeport, (203) 576-9168 (bloodroot.com). Closed Mon. L (Tues., Thurs.-Sat.) D SB, $$, WA

Bobby Q's Bodacious Barbeque & Grill • ***Barbecue*** The real deal: BBQ nachos, baby-back ribs, the brisket Reuben, burnt ends and lots more. • 42 Main St., Westport, (203) 454-7800 (bobbyqsrestaurant.com). Open daily. EL D, $$, E, WA

Bonda • ***New American*** Decorated in a hip orange color scheme, Bonda serves up pan-roasted sea scallops, Berkshire pork chop and tequila chipotle-braised lamb tacos. 75 Hillside Rd., Fairfield, (203) 292-9555 (bondarestaurant.com). Closed Sun.-Mon. D, $$, WA

Brasitas • ***Latin Fusion*** A gathering place for friends and family to enjoy exciting contemporary Latin Fusion cuisine, but with traditional accents. • 430 Main Ave., Norwalk, (203) 354-7329; 954 E. Main St., Stamford, (203) 323-3176 (brasitas.com). Open daily. L D $$

The Capital Grille • ***Steak*** Located in the heart of downtown Stamford this classic-style steakhouse serves dry-aged porterhouse as well as creative seafood dishes like citrus-glazed salmon. • 230 Tresser Blvd., Stamford, (203) 967-0000 (thecapitalgrille.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D $$$, E, WA

Cesco's Trattoria • ***Italian*** Chef Aldo Chiamulera's new restaurant is a sophisticated riff on an Old World country villa. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 25 Old Kings Hwy., Darien, (203) 202-9985 (cescostrattoria.com). Open daily. L D, $$$, WA

Coromandel Cuisine of India • ***Indian*** A wide range of tasty Indian fare is served in a small, tastefully done space. • 25-11 Old Kings Hwy. N., Darien, (203) 662-1213; Coromandel Bistro, 86 Washington St., Norwalk, (203) 852-1213; 68 Broad St., Stamford, (203) 964-1010; 17 Pease Ave., Southport, (203) 259-1214 (coromandelcuisine.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

Dolce Cubano • ***Cuban*** You're in for a high-energy good time at this waterfront stunner. On the menu: Havana Buffalo wings, grilled oysters with tequila and sage butter and classic Spanish paella. • 78 Southfield Ave., Westport, (203) 817-0700 (dolcecubano.com). L D SB LS $$

Elm • ***American*** World-class chef Brian Lewis makes culinary magic here—with the freshest local, top-quality ingredients—in an elegant minimalist environment. And there's a great Sunday brunch. • 73 Elm St., New Canaan, (203) 920-4994 (elmrestaurant.com). Closed Monday. D SB, $$$, WA [★★★ 11/13]

The Fez • ***Moroccan*** In addition to excellent Moroccan fare—with small plates (kabobs, falafel salad) and large (slow-braised lamb shank, swordfish tagine)—The Fez serves up live music nightly. • 227 Summer St., Stamford, (203) 324-3391 (thefez1.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D LS, $$

Fin • ***Japanese*** Specializes in fresh, imaginative sushi and authentic Japanese cuisine. • 1253 Post Rd., Fairfield, (203) 255-6788; 219 Main St., Stamford, (203) 359-6688 (fin-sushi.com). Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

F.I.S.H. • ***Seafood*** Its name stands for Fresh Innovative Seafood House and this mod-elegant restaurant delivers on that promise, featuring a wide variety of excellently prepared seafood favorites and a special "Naked Fish" section of the menu that lets you choose your fish, how it's cooked and with which sauce it's topped. There are also creative cocktails aplenty including bottomless mimosas made with fresh-squeezed OJ. • 245 Bedford St., Stamford, (203) 724-9300 (fishstamford.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Thurs.) D, $$$, WA [★★★ 7/14]

Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana • ***Pizza*** While world-famous white clam pizza is the standout, just about any pie here is worth the wait. • 238 Commerce Dr., Fairfield, (203) 333-7373; 59 Federal Rd., Danbury, (203) 790-7373 (pepespizzeria.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $, WA

Gabriele's Italian Steakhouse • ***Italian*** A throwback to the days of power dining, Gabriele's is large and luxe, and so are the steaks, which include filet mignon served on the bone, Wagyu and bone-in porterhouse.

CONNECTICUT Magazine's restaurant listings are presented as a service to our readers. Information on specialties, prices, etc., was supplied by the restaurateurs. Space limitations in this guide prevent us from describing every restaurant in the state; omission is not intended to reflect upon the quality of an establishment. The listings include restaurants we know and love, and those recommended to us by our readers. Advertisers are guaranteed inclusion in the month they advertise. Restaurants chosen as winners of our 34th "Readers' Choice Restaurant Survey" are so designated. Restaurants reviewed after January 2010 are listed with our critic's ratings (poor; fair; ★ good; ★★ very good; ★★★ superior; ★★★★ extraordinary). Average entrée prices are based on dinner entrées: $—inexpensive (under $15); $$—moderate ($15-$25); $$$—expensive (over $25). This guide is updated regularly, but it is suggested that prices and hours be verified by phone. B (Breakfast); L (Lunch); D (Dinner); LS (Late Supper); SB (Sunday Brunch); E (Live Entertainment); WA (Wheelchair Access)

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• 35 Church St., Greenwich, (203) 622-4223 (gabrielesofgreenwich.com). Open daily. D, $$$

The Ginger Man • ***American*** A New England-style tavern with 52 beers on tap (and 80 in bottles), burgers, brick-grilled duck and New York strip. • 64 Greenwich Ave., Greenwich, (203) 861-6400; 99 Washington St., South Norwalk, (203) 354-0163 (gingermangreenwich.com; gingermannorwalk.com). Open daily. L D LS SB, $$, WA

Home on the Range • ***American*** A family-owned operation that treats its customers to home-style breakfast fare from omelets to pancakes as well as seasonal dishes. • 2992 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport, (203) 336-3514. Closed Mon. B L $

Joseph's Steakhouse • ***American*** Known for a New York-style steakhouse experience with gems such as prime dry-aged beef and its porterhouse steak for two. • 360 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport, (203) 337-9944 (josephssteakhouse.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri. 12-3 p.m.) D (Mon.-Thurs. 5-9:30 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 5-10:30 p.m., Sun. 5-9 p.m.) $$$, WA

l'escale • ***French*** A stylish, romantic dining room overlooking Greenwich Harbor that serves superb Provençal cuisine. • 500 Steamboat Rd., Delamar Greenwich Harbor, Greenwich, (203) 661-4600 (lescalerestaurant.com). B L D LS SB, $$, WA

Market Place • ***American*** Featuring American farm-to-table cuisine, and a menu that is equally healthy, locally sourced, unique, and delicious. The food and drink menus change according to what is currently fresh from farms the restaurant works with. • 33 Mill Plain Rd., Danbury, (203) 616-5836 (marketplacedanbury.com). Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

Mezon Tapas Bar & Restaurant • ***Latin Fusion*** The menu features an inventive mix of Spanish, Latin American and Caribbean dishes, featuring locally grown and seasonal ingredients. • 56 Mill Plain Rd., Danbury, (203) 748-0875 (mezonct.com). Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

Navaratna • ***Indian*** A pure vegetarian restaurant specializing in the cuisine of both North and South India. • 133 Atlantic St., Stamford, (203) 348-1070 (navaratnact.com). Open daily. L D $$

Ola • ***Nuevo Latino*** Fresh high-quality ingredients are knowledgeably prepared in-house. Nothing's too weird or outrageously expensive, the staff is helpful, the ambience nonjudgmental. • 694 Brooklawn Ave., Bridgeport, (203) 296-4884 (olarestaurantct.com). D WA $$

Ondine • ***French*** Serves classic French dishes such as duck foie gras with rhubarb-and-fig compote. One of the classic Fairfield County restaurants • 69 Pembroke Rd. (Rte. 37), Danbury, (203) 746-4900 (ondinerestaurant.com). Closed Mon.-Tues. D SB, $$$, WA

The Restaurant at Rowayton Seafood • ***Seafood*** Yellowfin tuna sashimi flatbread, seafood stew and grilled swordfish bruschetta are among the more unusual selections here. • 89 Rowayton Ave., Rowayton, (203) 866-4488 (rowaytonseafood.com). L D LS SB, $$, WA

Rive Bistro • ***French*** Serves up the classics—steak frites, moules Provençal, croque monsieur, frisée aux lardons and tarte tatin. • 299 Riverside Ave., Westport, (203) 557-8049 (rivebistro.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$ WA [★★★ 7/13]

The Spinning Wheel • ***American*** Enjoy a quintessentially New England-inspired menu with seasonal specials, local and homegrown accents, and modern adaptations of traditional comfort dishes. • 109 Black Rock Tpke., Redding, (203) 664-4000 (swredding.com). Closed Sun. L (Thur.-Sat.) D $$$, WA

Uberti's Fish Market • ***Seafood*** Enjoy specialties like fish-and-chips, cooked shrimp, stuffed scallops, lobster rolls and deep-fried lobster at this seafood market. • 88 Ferry Blvd., Stratford (203) 377-1429. Open daily. L D $$ WA

Hartford County

Abigail's Grille and Wine Bar • ***American*** A completely remodeled 1780 tavern blending classic charm with upscale casual dining. Try Gorgonzola-topped pork chops or cedar-plank Atlantic salmon. • 4 Hartford Rd., Simsbury, (860) 264-1580 (abigailsgrill.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D SB, $$, WA

À Vert Brasserie • ***French*** Owned by two chefs who in recent years have been making the Connecticut foodie world sit up and take notice, this restaurant offers beautiful food combined with imagination, perfectionism and zest. • 35 LaSalle Rd., West Hartford, (860) 904-6240 (avertbrasserie.com). • Open daily. L D, LS, $$, WA

Barcelona Restaurant & Wine Bar • ***Spanish Mediterranean*** Barcelona's newest location in a popular line of hip, European-style restaurants. • 971 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, (860) 218-2100 (barcelonawinebar.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D LS, $$, E, WA

Doogie's Hot Dogs • ***American*** Featured on "Man vs. Food" this road-food way station is home to the two-foot hot dog. Other specialties include burgers, fries, seafood and Philly cheese steaks. • 225 Berlin Tpke., Broad St., Newington, (860) 666-DOGS (doogieshotdogs.com). Open daily. L D, $, WA

Firebox • ***New American*** Firebox boasts a seasonal, Connecticut farm-inspired menu including seared Stonington scallops and Connecticut farm-raised lamb. • 539 Broad St., Hartford, (860) 246-1222 (fireboxrestaurant.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $$, E, WA

Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar • ***American*** A premier destination for prime meats and chops, fresh fish and poultry, with a sophisticated wine list. • Blue Back Square, 44 South Main St., West Hartford, (860) 676-WINE (flemingssteakhouse.com). Open daily. D, $$, WA

Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana • ***Pizza*** While world-famous white clam pizza is the standout, any pie here is worth the wait. • 1148 New Britain Ave., West Hartford, (860) 236-7373; 221 Buckland Hills Dr., Manchester, (860) 644-7333 (pepespizzeria.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $, WA

Grants Restaurant, Bar & Patisserie • ***Continental*** A West Hartford institution serving inventive dishes like braised lamb shank, pistachio-crusted Idaho trout and chocolate-caramel opera cake. • 977 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, (860) 236-1930 (billygrant.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$, WA

Joey Garlic's • ***Italian*** Enjoy New Haven-style brick-oven pizzas, fresh-ground burgers, grinders and pasta in a family-friendly atmosphere. • 150 Kitts La., Newington, (860) 372-4620; 372 Scott Swamp Rd., Farmington, (860) 678-7231; 353 Park Rd., West Hartford, (860) 523-5639 (joeygarlics.com). Open daily. L D, $, WA

La Trattoria • ***Italian/American*** Enjoy seafood linguine fra diavolo and tableside Caesar salad. Banquet facility on premises. • Rte. 44, Canton, (860) 673-5000 (latrattoriact.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri., Sun.) D, $$, E (weekends), WA

Liana's Trattoria • ***Italian*** Liana DiMeglio's homemade pastas and sauces pack 'em in at this cozy little gem. • 591 Tunxis Hill Rd., Fairfield, (203) 368-1235. Closed Sun.-Mon. D, $$

Little Pub • ***American*** Great food, generous drinks, seasonal menus and a lively pub atmosphere where you'll feel right at home. • 59 Ethan Allen Hwy., Ridgefield, (203) 544-9222 (littlepub.com). Open daily. L D $$

Max Downtown • ***American*** A Hartford mainstay featuring global cuisine, chophouse classics, a fine wine list and lighter fare in the tavern. *Wine Spectator* Best of Award of Excellence. • 185 Asylum St., Hartford, (860) 522-2530 (maxrestaurantgroup.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D LS, $$$, WA

Max Fish • ***Seafood*** A lively, upscale fish house serving a daily selection of fresh seafood and great steaks. The Shark Bar is more casual, offering lighter fare and Max classics in an up-tempo environment. • 110 Glastonbury Blvd., Glastonbury, (860) 652-3474 (maxfishct.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D LS, $$

Metro Bis • ***American*** The restaurant's got a lovely new home at Simsbury 1820 House, but the focus hasn't changed—classically grounded innovation, seasonally oriented and ever open to a playful riff or two. • 731 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, (860) 651-1908 (metrobis.com). Closed Sun. L D, $$, WA

The Mill on the River • ***American*** Pan-seared Chilean sea bass and pork chop Milanese are tops at this former gristmill. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 989 Ellington Rd., South Windsor, (860) 289-7929 (themillontheriver.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D SB, $$, WA

Millwright's Restaurant • ***American*** Tyler Anderson dazzled us for years at The Copper Beech Inn. Now, he's wowing all comers at this sparkling restaurant. • 77 West St., Simsbury, (860) 651-5500 (millwrightsrestaurant.com). Closed Mon.-Tues. D, $$$, WA

Pit Stop BBQ • ***Barbecue*** Carolina pulled pork and steamed cheeseburgers, plus a feast of homemade sides, including cole slaw, soups and chili. • 985 W. Main St., New Britain, (860) 229-4111. Closed Sun. L, $

ON20 • ***Contemporary French/American*** Savor panaromic city views and sophisticated atmosphere along with sumptuous seasonal cuisine. • 400 Columbus Blvd., 20th Floor, Hartford, (860) 722-5161 (ontwenty.com). Closed Sat.-Sun. L D (Thurs.-Fri.), $$ (L) $$$ (D), E

Republic • ***Gastropub*** Handcrafted beers, boutique wines and small-batch bourbons are offered at this high-end pub. • 39 Jerome Ave., Bloomfield, (860) 216-5852 (republicct.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D LS, $$ [★★½ 10/14]

Rizzuto's Wood-Fired Kitchen & Bar • ***Italian*** Features Neapolitan-style pizza, house-made pasta, artisan breads and an antipasto bar. • 111 Memorial Rd., Blue Back Square, West Hartford, (860) 232-5000 (rizzutos.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse • ***Steak*** Billed as "the steak that speaks for itself" the steaks served at the Connecticut location of this national chain are USDA Prime. In addition, the restaurant utilizes locally sourced produce in its recipes. • 2513 Berlin Tpke., Newington, (860) 666-2202 (ruthschris.com). L (Sun.) D $$$, WA

Salute • ***Italian/American*** It's like a classy party every night at this restaurant, where diners enjoy everything from traditional pasta dishes (including gluten-free choices) to giobatto, a robust chicken-sausage stew in a spicy broth served over fettucine. • 100 Trumbull St., Hartford, (860) 899-1350 (salutect.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$, WA

Shady Glen • ***American*** A dairy bar/restaurant known for cheeseburgers and ice cream. • 840 Middle Tpke. E., Manchester, (860) 649-4245; 360 Middle Tpke. W., Manchester, (860) 643-0511. Open daily. L D, $, WA

Sorella • ***Italian*** A new kid on the block from restaurant pros Billy Carbone and Dan Keller, who own Dish across the street. • 901 Main St., Hartford, (860) 244-9084 (sorellahartford.com). L (Mon.-Sat.) D $$, WA

Tisane Euro-Asian Café • ***Asian Fusion*** The diverse menu is complemented by over 40 specialty martinis and other specialty drinks. Try the Far East nachos, wings trio, Tisane Cobb salad, noodle bowls and espresso steak. • 537 Farmington Ave., Hartford, (860) 523-5417 (mytisane.com). Open daily. L D SB, $, E, WA

Trumbull Kitchen • ***American*** "Global comfort food" is served at communal tables in the bar or individual tables in the dining rooms at this sophisticated city brasserie. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 150 Trumbull St., Hartford, (860) 493-7417 (maxrestaurantgroup.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D LS, $$, E

Treva Restaurant • ***Italian*** Offers chef-inspired Northern Italian cuisine—bronzino, tagliardi and porchetta—in a warm, rustic and casual environment. Treva's mixologists create a wide range of cocktails. • 980 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, (860) 232-0407 (trevact.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D SB LS, $$

USS Chowder Pot IV • ***Seafood*** Baked stuffed shrimp and prime rib are tops. • 165 Brainard Rd., Hartford, (860) 244-3311 (chowderpot.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$, WA

Vinted Wine Bar & Kitchen • ***Tapas*** This exciting restaurant in Blue Back Square serves 68 wines by the glass along with an ambitious small-plates menu. 63 Memorial Rd., West Hartford, (860) 206-4648 (vintedwinebar.com). Open daily. D, $$, WA

The Willows • ***American*** A suave boîte in the DoubleTree Hotel helmed by star chef Leo Bushey III. On the menu: vanilla-poached lobster, pot-au-feu and pork tenderloin roulade with sun-dried fruit. • 42 Century Dr., Bristol, (860) 589-7766 (doubletree-bristol.com). Open daily 5 to 10. D, $$$, WA [★★★½ 8/13]

Wood-n-Tap • ***American*** Hip, fun eateries known for great burgers and great beer. You'll also love the pizza, pasta, salads and sandwiches. • 99 Sisson Ave., Hartford, (860) 232-TAPS; 1274 Farmington Ave., Farmington, (860) 773-OPEN; 420 Queen St., Southington, (860) 329-0032; 12 Town Line Rd., Rocky Hill, (860) 571-9444 (woodntap.com). Open daily. L D LS, $, WA

Litchfield County

Arethusa al Tavolo • ***New American*** This high-flying country restaurant serves sparkling dishes like butter-poached halibut with crab paella, rack of lamb and a glorious reinvention of Peking duck. • 828 Bantam Rd., Bantam, (860) 567-0043 (arethusaaltavolo.com). Open Thurs.-Sun. D, $$$, WA

Backstage • ***American*** Enjoy casual American fare prepared from scratch—salads and soups, creative small plates, hand-formed Angus patties on house-baked rolls—and 40 beers on tap. • 84 Main St., Torrington, (860) 489-8900 (backstageeatdrinklive.com). Open daily. L D LS SB, $$, E, WA

Carmen Anthony Fishhouse • ***Seafood & Steak*** Carmen Anthony offers an impressive variety of fresh-only seafood, big Maine lobsters (up to five pounds) and thick Black Angus steaks. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 757 Main St., Woodbury, (203) 266-0011. Open daily. L D LS, $$$, E, WA

Carole Peck's Good News Cafe • ***New American*** Chef Carole Peck offers original dishes like warm crab taco and chicken tagine. • 694 Main St. S., Woodbury, (203) 266-GOOD (good-news-cafe.com). Closed Tues. L D, $$

Community Table • ***American*** Chef Joel Viehland offers a seasonal menu using only ingredients grown, raised or foraged within a 200-mile radius. • 223 Litchfield Tpke., Washington, (860) 868-9354 (communitytablect.com). Closed Tues.-Wed. D SB, $$, WA

The Cookhouse • ***Barbecue*** "Slo-smoked" baby-back ribs and pulled pork are the name of the game here. • 31 Danbury Rd. (Rte. 7), New Milford, (860) 355-4111 (thecookhouse.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

da Capo Brick-Oven Pizza • ***Italian*** Enjoy authentic New York-style pizza and generous single-portion or family-style entrées. Seasonal-inspired salads and delicious homemade desserts complete the menu. • 625 Torrington Rd., Litchfield, (860) 482-6246 (dacaporestaurant.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Gifford's • ***American*** Enjoy an American melting pot of a menu that features the flavors of Thailand, Tuscany, Vietnam, Morroco and France, as well as local farm fare. In winter guests can enjoy a fireplace, in summer they can eat outside on an awning-shaded dining terrace. • 9 Maple St., Kent, (860) 592-0262 (jpgifford.com). Closed Mon.-Tues. D, $$$, WA [★★½ 6/14]

G.W. Tavern • ***American*** A Colonial-style tavern with a cozy bar and live music on weekends. Serves seasonal all-natural foods, including steaks and fresh seafood. • 20 Bee Brook Rd. (Rte. 47), Washington Depot, (860) 868-6633 (gwtavern.com). Open daily. L D LS SB, $$, WA

The Hopkins Inn • ***Austrian/American*** A country inn with an Old World atmosphere known for wiener schnitzel, backhendl and fresh-caught trout. • 22 Hopkins Rd., Warren, (860) 868-7295. Closed Mon. B L (Tues.-Sat.) D, $$$

Infinity Hall Music & Bistro • ***Bistro•American*** Small plates, great entrées and delicious desserts in a music-themed dining room. • 20 Greenwoods Rd., Norfolk, (860) 542-5531 (infinityhall.com). Closed Tues. L D SB, $$, E, WA

John's Café • ***New American*** A popular spot for New American cuisine with a Mediterranean accent: grilled pizzas, ricotta gnocchi and salmon with morels. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 693 Main St. S., Woodbury, (203) 263-0188 (johnscafe.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$, WA

Longwood Country Inn • ***New England*** Enjoy fine dining in a historic 1789 inn where the options include lobster bisque, seafood crêpes and roast quail. • 1204 Main St. S., Woodbury, (203) 266-0800 (longwoodcountryinn.com). Closed Mon. L (Tues.-Sat.) D (Tues.-Sat.) SB, $$, WA

The Painted Pony • ***American*** This cozy spot offers a variety of dishes, from prime rib and steak to pasta and pizza. Live entertainment every Thurs. • 74 Main St. (Rte. 61), Bethlehem, (203) 266-5771 (paintedponyrestaurant.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $, E, WA

Pastorale • ***French/Mediterranean*** Housed in a 1760s Colonial, Pastorale uses local and organic ingredients in dishes like pan-seared Idaho rainbow trout, chicken paillard and moules marinière. • 223 Main St., Lakeville, (860) 435-1011 (pastoralebistro.com). Closed Mon. D SB, $$, WA

Patty's Restaurant • ***American*** A delightful breakfast experience with generous portions—the menu is influenced by season and might include treats such as raisin French toast or apple, walnut and cranberry pancakes. • 499 Bantam Rd., Litchfield, (860) 567-3335. Open daily. B L $

The Restaurant at Winvian • ***French*** Chef Chris Eddy constantly changes the menu, using simple and seasonal ingredients accented with unusual and fresh findings. • 155 Alain White Rd., Morris, (860) 567-9600 (winvian.com). Closed Mon.-Tues. L D, $$$, WA

River Bistro • ***Mediterranean*** Located on the banks of the Housatonic River, River Bistro offers fine Mediterranean cuisine with a Spanish accent. The house specialties include a variety of tapas and traditional paella. • 300 Kent Rd., New Milford, (860) 355-4466 (riverbistro.net). Closed Mon.-Tues. L (Sun.) D, $$, WA

Salsa Restaurant • ***Southwestern*** Salsa highlights Southwestern cuisine with house-made mild-to-hot New Mexican-style dishes, fajitas, quesadillas and house-made salsas. • 31 Bank St., New Milford, (860) 350-0701. Closed Mon. L D, $, WA

Scarpelli's • ***American*** Since 1936, Scarpelli's has been offering classic comfort foods like chicken parmigiana, meat loaf, fried chicken and fish-and-chips. • 865 Migeon Ave., Torrington, (860) 482-7977 (scarpellisclassiccatering.com). Open daily. B L D, $$, WA

Venetian Restaurant • ***Classic Italian*** Enjoy seasonal specials and traditional fare like house-made pasta, veal dishes, grilled lamb chops, and tiramisu and rum cake for dessert. • 52 East Main St., Torrington, (860) 489-8592 (thevenetianrestaurant.com). Closed Tues. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$, WA

The Village Restaurant • ***American*** A historic pub and restaurant in the heart of Litchfield. Veal Bartalucci, Parmesan-and-horseradish-encrusted salmon and cheeseburgers top the menu. • 25 West St., Litchfield, (860) 567-8307 (village-litchfield.com). Open daily. L D, $$

West Street Grill • ***New American*** An innovative restaurant with a star-studded clientele and menu to match. Serves wild fish, handmade pasta and organic salads. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 43 West St., Litchfield, (860) 567-3885 (weststreetgrill.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$$, R (on weekends), WA

The White Horse Country Pub • ***American*** Serves American pub favorites like burgers, ribs and seafood bake, along with some English ones—shepherd's pie, fish-and-chips and bangers and mash. • 258 New Milford Tpke., Washington, (860) 868-1496 (whitehorsecountrypub.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

Yokohama • ***Japanese*** Delicious tempura and teriyaki dishes, plus sushi and sashimi. • 131 Danbury Rd., New Milford, (860) 355-0556 (yokohama-sushi.net). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Middlesex County

Alforno • ***Northern Italian*** Known for a great selection of house-made ravioli, including veal osso buco with fresh ricotta ravioli, butternut squash ravioli and wild boar ravioli, as well as tagliatelle Bolognese and arugula chicken. • 1654 Boston Post Rd., Old Saybrook, (860) 399-4166 (alforno.net). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Amici Italian Grill • ***Italian*** Features a relaxed atmosphere and a menu of seafood fra diavolo, filet mignon and chicken Milanese. • 280 Main St., Riverview Ctr., Middletown, (860) 346-0075 (amiciitaliangrill.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$

Angelico's Lake House • ***American*** Overlooking Lake Pocotopaug, Angelico's features great outside dining and a tiki hut. Try the spinach risotto, roast prime rib, stuffed salmon or lobster ravioli with sautéed shrimp. • 81 North Main St., East Hampton, (860) 267-1276 (angelicoslakehouse.com). Open daily. L D LS SB, $$, E, WA

Aspen • ***New American*** The menu at this sophisticated spot includes small plates (house-made tagliatelle, grilled flatbreads) and large—duck breast, rabbit, lobster pappardelle, Stonington sea scallops and more. • 2 Main St., Old Saybrook, (860) 395-5888 (aspenct.com). Open daily. L (Tues.-Sun.) D, $$, WA

Baci Grill • ***Modern Italian*** Try house specialties like grilled mango-and-chipotle pork loin, chicken sausage and broccoli rabe pasta, Guinness skirt steak and scallop risotto at this casual, trendy restaurant. • 134 Berlin Rd., Cromwell, (860) 613-2224 (bacigrill.com). Open daily. L D LS, $$, E, WA

Boom on the Water • ***American*** Dine on the outdoor deck overlooking a sea of yachts. Favorites include fried oysters, filet mignon Oscar with crabmeat-sherry cream and BBQ duck quesadillas. • Brewer's Pilots Point Marina, 63 Pilots Point Dr., Westbrook, (860) 399-2322 (boomrestaurant.net). Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

Café Routier Bistro & Lounge • ***New American Bistro*** Two menus here—regional and seasonal—change every six weeks; dishes might include seared Bomster scallops, hanger steak and Mexican seafood paella. • 1353 Post Rd., Westbrook, (860) 399-8700 (caferoutier.com). Open daily. D LS, $$, WA

Chicago Sam's • ***American*** This beloved sports bar takes sports fanaticism to new heights showing every NFL, MLB, NBA and NHL game. When it comes to the menu this place is also a winner. The 70-item pub menu serves lunch till midnight and 20 seasonally rotating beers are on tap. • 51 Shunpike Rd., Cromwell, (860) 635-1860 (chicagosams.com). Open Daily. L D LS, $, E, WA

Chip's Pub III • ***American*** Something for everyone here, from salads and sliders to fried seafood platters and steaks. • 24 West Main St., Clinton, (860) 669-DINE (chipspub3.com). Open daily. L D, $, WA

Chamard Bistro • ***French*** This sophisticated rustic bistro features a farm-to-table menu that changes seasonally • 115 Cow Hill Rd., Clinton, (860) 664-0299, (chamard.com). Open daily. L, D, SB $$, WA

Coyote Blue Tex Mex Café • ***Tex-Mex*** The extensive menu includes the spinach-and-feta quesadilla, cattleman's steak and Southwestern stir-fry served over Mexican rice. • 1960 Saybrook Rd., Middletown, (860) 345-2403 (coyoteblue.com). Closed Mon. D, $, WA

Cuckoo's Nest • ***Mexican*** Housed in a 200-year-old barn, Cuckoo's Nest has been serving nachos, fajitas, Cajun shrimp and scallops for over 35 years. • 1712 Post Rd., Old Saybrook, (860) 399-9060 (cuckoosnest.biz). Open daily. L D SB, $$, E, WA

Fresh Salt • ***American*** Drink in the glorious water view while savoring cioppino, merlot-braised short ribs, osso buco and Block Island swordfish. • 2 Bridge St., Old Saybrook, (860) 395-2000 (saybrook.com). Open daily. B L (Mon.-Sat.) D SB, $$$, E, WA

Gabrielle's • ***American Bistro*** Gabrielle's is an upscale bistro serving grilled tenderloin of beef, pan-seared scallops and pan-roasted fillet of salmon. • 78 Main St., Centerbook, (860) 767-2440 (gabrielles.net). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D SB, $$, WA

Gelston House • ***American*** This historic restaurant offers unparalleled views of the Goodspeed Opera House and the Connecticut River. Entrées include pan-seared duck breast, filet mignon and lamb ragout. • 8 Main St., East Haddam, (860) 873-1411 (gelstonhouse.com). Closed Mon. L (Tues.-Sun.) D LS SB, $$, E, WA

The Griswold Inn • ***American*** The beloved 1776 "Gris" features classic New England cuisine in the dining room, small plates and 50 wines by the glass in the wine bar, and a lively taproom. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 36 Main St., Essex, (860) 767-1776 (griswoldinn.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$$, E, WA

Hilltop BBQ • ***Barbecue*** Beer-battered onion rings, loaded chili, Memphis-style baby-back ribs and cornmeal-and-jalapeño-crusted catfish are just a few of the down-home choices here. • 12 Rae Palmer Rd., Moodus, (860) 873-1234 (hilltopbbqsteakhouse.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Haveli India • ***Indian*** Amidst traditional Indian decor, Haveli serves coconut soup, chicken tikka masala, diwani kebab, fish tandoori and the Haveli mixed grill.

• 1300 South Main St., Middletown, (860) 347-7773 (haveliindia.com). Open daily. L D, $, WA

Lenny & Joe's Fish Tale • ***Seafood*** This Connecticut institution serves all manner of fresh seafood, from hot lobster rolls to baked stuffed shrimp to fried whole-belly clams. • 86 Boston Post Rd., Westbrook, (860) 669-0767 (ljfishtale.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Liv's Oyster Bar • ***Seafood*** Liv's is a stylish, small neighborhood restaurant housed in an old movie theater. Stonington sea scallops, wild salmon, organic chicken and heirloom vegetables top the menu. • 166 Main St., Old Saybrook, (860) 395-5577 (livsoysterbar.com). Closed Tues. D, $$, WA

Luigi's • ***Italian*** Enjoy classic Italian favorites like seafood cannelloni, chicken leonardo, veal parmigiana, whole clams, prime rib and other dishes in a warm, home-like atmosphere. • 1295 Boston Post Road, Old Saybrook, (860) 388-9190 (luigis-restaurant.com). Closed Monday (except in July and August). D, $$, WA

Penny Lane Pub • ***English Pub*** A two-story pub serving casual fare like burgers, shepherd's pie, nachos, fish and chips, steaks and salads. • 150 Main St., Old Saybrook, (860) 388-9646 (pennylanepub.net). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

The Restaurant at Water's Edge • ***Continental*** Drink in the view of Long Island Sound as you savor fare like filet mignon and applewood-smoked Atlantic salmon. • 1525 Boston Post Rd., Westbrook, (860) 399-5901 (watersedge-resort.com). B L D SB, $$$, WA

Restaurant L&E/French 75 Bar • ***French*** Upstairs you'll find formal, elegant dining and a seasonal menu while downstairs offers a more traditional bistro experience. • 59 Main St., Chester, (860) 526-5301 (restaurantlande.com). Open daily. D LS, $$$, WA

River Tavern • ***American*** Farm-to-table pioneer Jonathan Rapp wears top toque at this town fixture. On the menu: made-to-order guacamole, grilled Stonington swordfish, New York strip. • 23 Main St., Chester, (860) 526-9417 (rivertavernrestaruant.com). Open daily. L D $$

Westbrook Lobster • ***Seafood*** Offers the freshest fish possible in dishes ranging from baked stuffed lobster to teriyaki-grilled salmon to seafood paella. • 346 Boston Post Rd., Clinton, (860) 664-9464 (westbrooklobster.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

New Haven County

116 Crown • ***American Tapas/Small Plates*** Dine on sliders, pizzettes and charcuterie and cheese in a loungelike atmosphere—along with exciting house cocktails created by mixologist John Ginnetti. • 116 Crown St., New Haven, (203) 777-3116 (116crown.com). D LS, $$, E, WA

121 Restaurant @ OXC • ***American*** Watch the planes take off and land at 121, located at the Waterbury-Oxford Airport. The menu runs from great pizzas and burgers to an eclectic mix of American favorites. • 7 Juliano Dr., Oxford, (203) 262-0121 (121atoxc.com). Closed Mon. L D, $$, E, WA

Aldario's Restaurant • ***Classic Italian*** Featuring rich colors, cozy booths and vaulted ceilings, this spot serves pork osso buco and zuppa di pesce. • 240 Naugatuck Ave., Milford, (203) 874-6096 (aldarios.com). Closed Mon. L D, $$, WA

Archie Moore's Bar & Restaurant • ***American*** Casual pub-style dining with burgers, nachos and salads. And don't miss the award-winning buffalo chicken wings. • 188½ Willow St., New Haven, (203) 773-9870; 39 N. Main St., Wallingford, (203) 265-7100; 15 Factory La., Milford, (203) 876-5088, (archiemoores.com). Open daily. L D LS, $

Bar Bouchée • ***French*** Jean Pierre Vuillermet's classic bistro has a black-and-white tile floor, pressed-tin-style walls and ceiling and a zinc bar. On the menu: duck leg confit, charcuterie and beef bourguignon. • 8 Scotland Rd., Madison, (203) 318-8004. Open daily. D, $$

Barcelona Restaurant & Wine Bar • ***Spanish Mediterranean*** A hip restaurant serving Spanish and Mediterranean cuisine—including tapas, hot and cold. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 155 Temple St., New Haven, (203) 848-3000 (barcelonawinebar.com). Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

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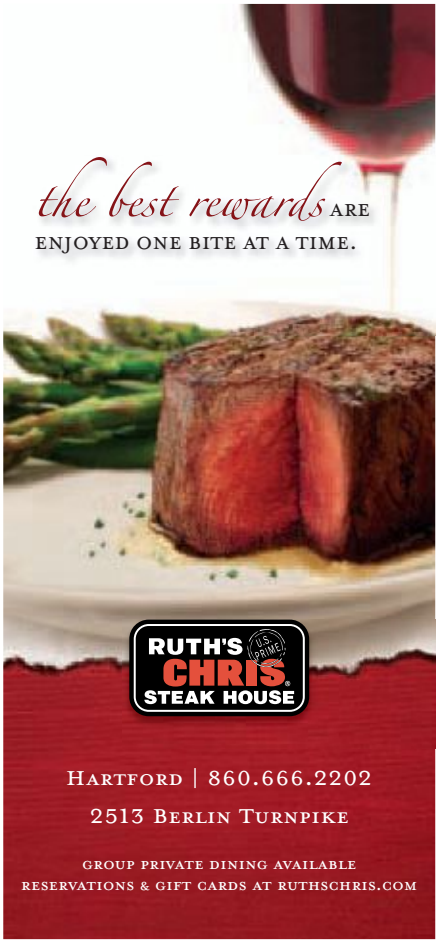
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Bin 100 • ***Mediterranean*** Feast on delicious Mediterranean cuisine elegantly served in a spacious dining room. • 100 Lansdale Ave., Milford, (203) 882-1400 (bin100restaurant.com). Open daily. D SB, $$, E, WA

Bistro Mediterranean • ***Mediterranean*** This casual and relaxed restaurant has Spanish and Mediterranean influences and offers a variety of beloved dishes including scallops parrilla, paella and brussels sprout salad. • 383 Main St., East Haven, (203) 467-2500, (bistromediterraneanandtapasbar.com. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Carmen Anthony Steakhouse • ***Steak & Seafood*** The place to enjoy thick Black Angus steaks and Maine lobsters in a clubby atmosphere. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • 496 Chase Ave., Waterbury, (203) 757-3040; 660 State St., New Haven, (203) 773-1444 (carmenanthony.com). L D LS, $$$, WA

The Cask Republic • ***Gastropub*** Beer is the star here, with 125 bottled and more than 50 draft beers on offer. Pair it with dishes like sweet-potato clam chowder, oyster sliders and pan-seared sea scallops. • 179 Crown St., New Haven, (475) 238-8335 (thecaskrepublic.com). Closed Sun. L D, $$, WA

Ceviche • ***Latin Fusion*** The specialty here is of course ceviche and several different styles are offered. In addition the place features a variety of sizzling Latin dishes, cocktails and 30 different types of tapas. Try the Granada Mojito, which features pomegranate flavors. • 530 Middlebury Road, Middlebury, (203) 527-7634 (cevichelatinkitchen.com). Closed Monday. L (Wed.-Thurs.) D LS, $$, WA

Claire's Corner Copia • ***Vegetarian*** A café-style spot offering globe-trotting dishes like organic-mushroom crêpes, Bengal curry, Irish breakfast and Lithuanian coffee cake. • 1000 Chapel St., New Haven, (203) 562-3888 (clairescornercopia.com). Open daily. B L D SB, $, WA

Consiglio's Restaurant • ***Classic Italian*** Family-owned and -run for over 70 years, Consiglio's is known for classic home-style favorites like homemade cavatelli and braciole, eggplant rollatini and lasagna. • 165 Wooster St., New Haven, (203) 865-4489 (consiglios.com). Open daily. L (Tues.-Fri., Sun.) D, $$

Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana • ***Pizza*** While world-famous white clam pizza is the standout, just about any pie here is worth the wait. • 157 Wooster St., New Haven, (203) 865-5762 (pepespizzeria.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $, WA

Geronimo Tequila Bar & Southwest Grill • ***Southwestern Fusion*** A mix of traditional Native American, Mexican, Spanish and Anglo-American fare, with bold flavors and authentic ingredients. • 271 Crown St., New Haven, (203) 777-7700 (geronimobarandgrill.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$ [★★ 7/13]

Goodfellas Restaurant • ***Italian*** The extensive menu is a veritable Best Hits of Italy, featuring pastas and gnocchi, pork chop Milanese, steak pizzaiola, veal saltimbocca and the chef's signature filet cognac. • 702 State St., New Haven, (203) 785-8722 (goodfellasrestaurant.com). Open daily. L, D, $$, WA

Heirloom • ***Modern Continental*** Chef Carey Savona serves herbed gnocchi with rapini and tomatoes, and crab cakes with fennel and vermouth butter. • The Study at Yale, 1157 Chapel St., New Haven, (203) 503-3919 (studyhotels.com). Open daily. B L (Mon.-Sat.) D SB, $$, WA

J. Christian's • ***New American*** A smart, lively restaurant and lounge that takes no shortcuts in preparing New American cuisine with a Southern accent. • 9 North Main St., Wallingford, (203) 265-6393 (jchristians.com). Closed Mon. L D, $$

Ibiza Tapas • ***Tapas*** Requeson cheese croquettes, sautéed shrimp in garlic sauce and Spanish veal-and-pork meatballs are among the offerings. • 1832 Dixwell Ave., Hamden, (203) 909-6512 (ibizatapaswinebar.com). Open daily. L D, $, WA

La Tavola Ristorante • ***Classic Italian*** Enjoy a twist on classic Italian cuisine with prosciutto-wrapped figs, pumpkin ravioli and pepper-encrusted Ahi tuna. • 702 Highland Ave., Waterbury, (203) 755-2211 (latavolaristorante.com). Closed Sun. L D, $$, WA

Lenny & Joe's Fish Tale • ***Seafood*** This Connecticut institution serves all manner of fresh seafood, from hot lobster rolls to baked stuffed shrimp to fried whole-belly clams. • 501 Long Wharf Dr., New Haven, (203) 691-6619 (ljfishtale.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

L'Orcio • ***Contemporary Italian*** This upscale restaurant features a menu of house-made pastas, grilled whole fish and steaks. • 806 State St., New Haven, (203) 777-6670 (lorcio.com). Closed Mon. L (Fri.) D, $$

Miya's • ***Sushi*** A sushi restaurant like no other, thanks to chef Bun Lai's unique creations (including many vegetarian items). • 68 Howe St., New Haven, (203) 777-9760 (miyassushi.com). Closed Sun.-Mon. L D, $$$, WA

Park Central Tavern • ***American*** The dynamic weekly menu showcases signature entrées and classic favorites made with fresh New England ingredients. • 1640 Whitney Ave., Hamden, (203) 287-8887 (parkcentraltavern.com). Open daily. L D, $, WA

Ristorante Luce • ***Classic Italian*** Enjoy the double-cut veal chops, pane cotto, risotto pescatore and daily fish specials. Extensive wine list. • 2987 Whitney Ave., Hamden, (203) 407-8000 (ristoranteluce.net). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $$

Roìa • ***French/Italian*** This new spot in the Taft Hotel building evokes a golden era when romance reigned. On the menu: artichoke soup, chicken al mattone and panna cotta. 261 College St., New Haven, (203) 200-7045 (roiarestaurant.com). D (Wed.-Sun.) $$ WA

Sage American Grill & Oyster Bar • ***American*** Take in spectacular waterfront views at historic City Point while enjoying fresh seafood, oysters and certified Angus prime rib and steaks. Live jazz four nights a week. • 100 South Water St., New Haven, (203) 787-3466 (sageamerican.com). Open daily. D SB, $$, E, WA

Sake Fusion Restaurant • ***Asian Fusion*** Indian pancakes with curry sauce, Thai red snapper, Vietnamese-style grilled pork and Malaysian-style sautéed eggplant are just a few of the Asian-fusion dishes on the menu at this exotic spot. • 730 Main St. S., Southbury, (203) 264-2888 (sakefusionsouthbury.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $, WA

Sans Souci • ***American*** A casual mainstay in the area that prides itself on offering fresh pasta, steak, chicken, veal, seafood and other crowd pleasers. • 2003 N. Broad St., Meriden, (203) 639-1777 (sanssoucirestaurant.com). Closed Mon. L (Tues.-Fri.) D $$

Señor Pancho's • ***Mexican*** A festive spot serving up terrific fresh salsa and margaritas to go with mole poblano, steak ranchero and fajitas. • 280 Cheshire Rd., Prospect, (203) 758-7788; 385 Main St. S., Southbury, (203) 262-6988 (senorpanchos.com). Open daily. L D SB, $, E, WA

Thali Regional Cuisine of India • ***Indian*** Chic, exotic and fun. Thali dinners include Konkan crab, lamb chops and Andhra chicken curry. • 4 Orange St., New Haven, (203) 777-1177 (thali.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

The Wharf • ***New American*** This great spot at the Madison Beach Hotel serves up steak tartare, cioppino and grilled Berkshire pork chop with roasted fennel—with a side of water views. • 94 West Wharf Rd., Madison, (203) 350-0014 (madisonbeachhotel.com). Open daily. B, L (Mon.-Sat.), D. $$$, WA

Wood-n-Tap • ***American*** Hip, fun eateries known for great burgers and great beer. You'll also love the pizza, pasta, salads and sandwiches. • 311 Boston Post Rd., Orange, (203) 799-9663; 970 N. Colony Rd., Wallingford, (203) 265-9663 (woodntap.com). Open daily. L D LS, $, WA

Zafra Cuban Restaurant & Rum Bar • ***Cuban*** With a collection of over 300 different kinds of rum—one of the largest in the country—this New Haven establishment is Connecticut's first true rum bar. Small, dark and atmospheric, in addition to rum this hip locale features chef Tadahiro ("Haya") Hayasaka's subtle and sometimes fanciful take on Cuban soul food. • 259 Orange St., New Haven, (203) 859-5342 (zafrarumbar.com). Open daily. L (Tues.-Fri.) D LS, $$, WA

New London County

Al Dente • ***Italian*** Savor the mouthwatering flavors of frutti di mare, farfalle con pollo and medaglioni de manzo, followed up with cannoli or tiramisu at this Italian dining gem. • Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashantucket, (800) Foxwoods (foxwoods.com). Open daily. D, $$$, E, WA

Alta Strada • ***Italian*** Try favorites like chittara with spicy lobster and fresh peas and grilled lamb chops with asparagus, potato and pickled onion salad. • MGM Grand at Foxwoods, 240 MGM Grand Dr., Mashantucket, (860) 312-2582 (altastradarestaurant.com). Open daily. L D, $$$

Azu • ***American*** Features a great bar and dishes such as grilled pizza salad, baked macaroni and cheese with lobster and linguine with red clam sauce. • 32 West Main St. Mystic, (860) 536-6336 (azuct.com). Open daily. B L D LS, $$

Ballo Italian Restaurant & Social Club • ***Italian*** A sumptuous restaurant inspired by the magnificent 12th-century Abbey of San Galgano in Siena. On the menu: pizza and pasta, striped bass and veal porterhouse. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, (860) 862-1100 (balloitalian.com). L D, $$, WA

Bar Americain • ***American*** This brasserie serves up Bobby Flay specialties like lobster-avocado cocktails, buttermilk-fried chicken with biscuits—and big-time glamour. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, (860) 862-8000 (baramericain.com). Open daily. D, $$

Bleu Squid • ***American*** A bakery and cheese shop serving 30 cheeses and 40 different cupcakes. Also serves up grilled cheese sandwiches to go, freshly made and to order, including the best-selling lobster grilled cheese. • 27 Coogan Blvd., Mystic, (860) 536-6343 (dessertsmysticct.com). Open daily. L D, $, WA

Bobby's Burger Palace • ***American*** This burger palace serves an array of burgers inspired by chef Bobby Flay's extensive travels. Each is a tribute to a different American regional flavor and tradition. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, (888) 226-7711 (www.bobbysburgerpalace.com). Open daily. L D, $$ WA

The Chestnut Grille • ***American*** The winning seasonal menu here includes treats such as pan-roasted duck breast and seared diver scallops. • The Bee and Thistle Inn, 100 Lyme St., Old Lyme, (860) 434-1667 (beeandthistleinn.com). Closed Sun.-Mon. D, $$$, E

The Captain Daniel Packer Inne • ***American*** This 1754 whaler's inn features a view of the Mystic River along with dishes like lemon pepper chicken, filet mignon and salmon • 32 Water St., Mystic, (860) 536-3555 (danielpacker.com). Open daily. L D, $$$ WA

C.C. O'Brien's • ***Irish Pub*** A neighborhood sports pub with great food, friendly service, sports on 20 HDTVs and live entertainment on Saturday nights. • 8 Mechanic St., Pawcatuck, (860) 599-2034 (ccobriens.com). Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

Caffé NV • ***Greek*** Greek cuisine is the specialty at this restaurant with stained-glass windows and brick walls. Some favorites include pasta a la Philip and shrimp Saganaki. • 57 Boston Post Rd., Waterford, (860) 444-8111 (cafenv.com). Closed Sun. L D LS, $$, WA

Cedar's Steakhouse • ***American*** Offers lounge seating and cozy booths. Diners can count on the finest cuts of certified dry-aged prime beef and fresh seafood. • Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashantucket, (800) FOXWOODS (foxwoods.com). Open daily. L D, $$$, WA

Chaplin's • ***Seafood*** Specializes in locally caught seafood and regional American bistro favorites. Standouts include halibut sautéed with almonds, tuna with fresh mango and roasted red-pepper sauce and swordfish garnished with salsa. • 165 Bank St., New London, (860) 443-0684. Open daily. D, $$, WA

The Chestnut Grille • ***American*** The winning seasonal menu here includes succulent treats such as pan-roasted duck breast and seared diver scallops. • The Bee and Thistle Inn, 100 Lyme St., Old Lyme, (860) 434-1667 (beeandthistleinn.com). Closed Sun.-Mon. D, $$$, E

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David Burke Prime • ***American*** An updated steakhouse menu with dry-aged beef, as well as terrific pork, chicken and seafood specialties. The steak served here is truly a cut above. • Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashantucket, (860) 312-8753 (davidburke-prime.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$$

Dog Watch Café • ***American*** Overlooking Dodson Boatyard in Stonington Borough, this spot offers a casual seaside atmosphere, great food and live entertainment on the weekends. Watch Hill oysters, St. Louis baby-back ribs and grilled swordfish are among the offerings. • 194 Water St., Stonington, (860) 415-4510 (dogwatchcafe.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Engine Room • ***American*** Choose from 16 craft beers on tap at one of the newest and hippest restaurants in Mystic. While burgers take the spotlight, they are by no means all that Engine Room's soup-to-nuts menu has to offer. There are bar bites, appetizers, big salads, sandwiches, entrées, sides and desserts. • 14 Holmes St., Mystic, (860) 415-8117 (engineroomct.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA [★★★ 5/14]

Flanders Fish Market & Restaurant • ***Seafood*** Flanders excels at lobster bisque, fish-and-chips and broiled seafood. Known for its bountiful Sunday buffet, fresh seafood market and New England clambakes. • 22 Chesterfield Rd., East Lyme, (860) 739-8866 (flandersfish.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana • ***Pizza*** While world-famous clam pizza is the standout, many other varieties are also worth the wait. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, (860) 862-8888 (pepespizzeria.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $, WA

Gaspar's Restaurant • ***New American Cuisine*** Enjoy award-winning lobster bisque, sushi rolls and other sea-to-table delicacies made from fresh seafood purchased blocks away at the New London docks. There's also Piedmontese beef steaks and other finely prepared new American cuisine classics. Ambience is old-school classy, white tablecloths, red roses and candlelight. • 385 Bank Street, New London, (860) 440-3663 (gasparsnewlondon.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$, WA

Harbour House Restaurant and Bar • ***Seafood*** Enjoy ahi tuna tacos, lobster, grilled swordfish and other seafood favorites in a casually elegant and comfortable setting with stunning water views. • 3 Williams Ave., Mystic, (860) 536-8144 (harbourhousect.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Fri.) D, $$, E, WA

Jasper White's Summer Shack • ***Seafood*** This award-winning restaurant features live lobster and crab, fried seafood, chowders and wood-grilled fish. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, (860) 862-9500 (summershackrestaurant.com). Open daily. L D SB, $$

Johnny's Peking Tokyo • ***Asian Fusion*** The finest in Asian-fusion cuisine, including ginger duck, shrimp and pork Hunan-style, sushi and sashimi. Dine in or order online for pickup. • 12 Coogan Blvd., Mystic, (860) 572-9991 (johnnysushibar.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Kensington's at The Spa at Norwich Inn • ***American*** A first-class restaurant serving gourmet food with an emphasis on natural meats, fresh, locally sourced produce and healthy preparations. • 607 West Thames St., Norwich, (860) 425-3630 (thespaatnorwichinn.com). Open daily. B L D SB, $$$, E, WA

Kitchen Little • ***American*** Enjoy a panoramic view of the Mystic River while dining on eggs Benedict, omelets and other savory egg dishes at this breakfast destination. • 36 Quarry Rd., Mystic (kitchenlittle.org). Open daily for breakfast. B L (Mon.-Fri.) SB, $

Michael Jordan's Steak House • ***American*** USDA prime steaks, chops and fresh seafood paired with an extensive wine list. • Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, (860) 862-8600 (michaeljordansteakhouse.com). Open daily. D, $$$

The Old Lyme Inn • ***American*** The Inn's restaurant and bar features a locally sourced menu with a modern twist on traditional dishes. • 85 Lyme St., Old Lyme, (860) 434-2600 (oldlymeinn.com). Open daily. L D, $$$, WA

Octagon • ***American*** The menu at this upscale yet relaxed steak house includes the signature 24-ounce bone-in rib eye, 14-ounce Kobe sirloin and wild striped bass. *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. • Mystic Marriott Hotel, 625 North Rd., Groton, (860) 326-0360 (octagonsteakhouse.com). Open daily. D, $$$, R

Oyster Club • ***American*** This popular place showcases food that travels the shortest distance from farm and sea to table, with seasonality and location determining the day's dishes. • 13 Water St., Mystic, (860) 415-9266 (oysterclubct.com). Closed Tues. L (Sat.) D SB, $$, WA

Paragon • ***American*** This 24th floor aerie is Foxwoods' showpiece, with a menu that highlights organic produce and meats: crispy wild boar meatballs and Dover sole with beurre noir. • Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashantucket, (800) 312-3000 (foxwoods.com). Closed Mon.-Tues. D, $$$, WA

Recovery Room Restaurant • ***American*** This is the place for designer pizzas, chopped salads and pasta dishes. Full bar. • 445 Ocean Ave., New London, (860) 443-2619 (therecoveryroomnl.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Rustic Cafe • ***American*** Customer favorites at this casual café include $9 lobster rolls, spinach salad, chocolburgers, cinnamon and chipotle baby back ribs, and homemade pies. • 445 Ocean Ave., New London, (860) 691-0477 (therusticcafe.com). Open daily. L D, $, E

S&P Oyster Co. • ***Seafood*** Serving traditional New England seafood with a South American flair. Enjoy oysters on the half shell, PEI mussels, fresh cuts of fish and Creekstone Farms steaks grilled over hard woods. • 1 Holmes St., Mystic, (860) 536-2674 (sp-oyster.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Shrine • ***Asian Fusion*** A restaurant that serves an array of alluring dishes with Vietnamese, Thai and Japanese influences—and one of the state's hottest night spots. • MGM Grand at Foxwoods, (860) 312-8888 (shrinemgmfoxwoods.com). Open daily. (Scorpion Bar). L D, $$

Tolland County

Altnaveigh Inn & Restaurant • ***American*** This 1734 farmhouse serves filet mignon with port-wine reduction demiglace and pan-seared tuna with onion marmalade. • 957 Storrs Rd., Storrs, (860) 429-4490 (altnaveighinn.com). Closed Sun.-Mon. L (Tues.-Fri.) D, $$$, WA

Angellino's Restaurant • ***Italian*** There's plenty to like at Angellino's, including penne Augustino with artichoke hearts, sun-dried tomatoes and garlic. • 135 Storrs Rd., Mansfield, (860) 450-7071; 346 Kelly Rd., Vernon, (860) 644-7702 (angellinos.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Asian Bistro • ***Asian Fusion*** A popular hibachi steak house/bar offering Asian-fusion dishes along with sushi and sashimi. • 95 Storrs Rd., Mansfield, (860) 456-8316 (asianbistromansfield.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Bidwell Tavern • ***American*** This 1822 Coventry tavern, once the town hall, offers prime rib, chicken wings and 24 beers on tap. • 1260 Main St. (Rte. 31), Coventry, (860) 742-6978. Open daily. L D LS, $$, E, WA

The Blue Oak at the Nathan Hale Inn • ***American*** On the UConn campus, enjoy honest New England-style dishes and lighter fare. Great wine selection. • 855 Bolton Rd., Storrs, (860) 427-7888 (nathanhaleinn.com). Open daily. B L D, $$

Coyote Flaco • ***Mexican*** Standouts at this colorful spot include chile rellenos, pollo al mole, bistek ranchero and the enchilada trio. • 50 Higgins Hwy., Mansfield, (860) 423-4414 (coyoteflacomansfield.com). Open daily. L (Fri.-Sun.) D, $$, WA

Casey's Café • ***American*** Wednesday is pasta night, Thursday is build-your-own Mexican specialties and Sunday is barbecue all day long at this family-run family-style restaurant. • 127 West Rd., Ellington, (860) 870-8784 (caseyscafect.com). Open daily. L D, $

Elmo's Dockside • ***Seafood*** Known for fresh, local seafood, homemade clam chowder and lobster bisque, USDA High Choice beef, poultry and pasta dishes. • 48 Hartford Tpke., Vernon, (860) 646-3474, (elmosdockside.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $$

Georgina's Italian Restaurant • ***Italian*** Warm and inviting—try the calamari appetizer, chicken Athena, lasagna and chicken parmigiano. 275 Boston Tpke., Bolton, (860) 647-0345 (georginasrestaurant.com). Closed Mon. L D, $$, WA

Little Mark's Big BBQ • ***Barbecue*** Little Mark's famous homemade sauces, such as Kansas City Sweet, Pork Pickin' Vinegar and Texas Hot, enhance the beef and pork ribs. • 226 Talcottville Rd., Vernon, (860) 872-1410 (littlemarksbbq.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Pancho Loco • ***Mexican*** Don your shorts and Hawaiian shirt and try this Parrothead paradise for sizzling fajitas and chillin' margaritas. • 218 Talcottville Rd., Vernon, (860) 871-1819 (pancholoco.net). Open daily. L D, $, E, WA

Rein's New York Style Deli-Restaurant • ***American*** A bright and bustling Jewish deli serving everything from challah French toast and potato pancakes to pastrami Reubens and cheese blintzes. • 435 Hartford Tpke., Vernon, (860) 875-1344 (reinsdeli.com). Open daily. B L D LS SB, $, WA

Somers Inn Restaurant • ***American*** American cuisine served in a historic country setting. Specialties include prime rib, baked stuffed shrimp with spinach-artichoke sauce and bacon-wrapped buffalo shrimp. • 585 Main St., Somers, (860) 749-2256 (thesomersinn.com). Closed Mon.-Tues. L (Wed.-Fri.) D SB, $$, WA

Tavern House Grill • ***American*** This pub-style sports bar features live entertainment and regular karaoke events. On the menu: steaks, burgers, grilled sandwiches and wings. • 200 Merrow Rd. Tolland, (860) 872-0332 (tavernhousegrill.com). Open daily. L D SB, $, E, WA

True Blue Tavern at the Nathan Hale Inn • ***American*** Great casual dining in a fun atmosphere celebrating the spirit of UConn athletics. • 855 Bolton Rd., Storrs, (860) 427-7888 (nathanhaleinn.com). Open daily. D, $, WA

Trattoria da Lepri • ***Italian*** This family-owned and -run eatery prepares dishes from scratch with local ingredients. On the menu: rigatoni Bolognese, veal scallopini Marsala and crabmeat-stuffed shrimp. • 89 West Rd., Ellington, (860) 875-1111 (trattoriadalepri.com). Closed Sun.-Mon. D, $$, WA

Utsav Indian Cuisine • ***Indian*** This gem boasts a menu of delectable Indian treats such as shamm savera or calamari cochin. • 575 Talcottville Rd., Vernon, (860) 871-8714 (utsavcuisine.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Vernon Diner • ***Continental*** Enjoy anything from homemade French toast and Greek specialties to steak, seafood and pasta at this friendly spot in Vernon. • 453 Hartford Tpke., Vernon, (860) 875-8812 (vernondiner.com). Open daily. B L D LS, $, WA

Willington Pizza House • ***Pizza*** Unusual designer pizza concoctions, including red-potato and seafood casino. • 25 River Rd. (Rte. 32), Willington, (860) 429-7433 (willingtonpizza.com). Open daily. L D LS, $, WA

Wood-n-Tap • ***American*** Known for great burgers and great beer. You'll also love the pizza, pasta, salads and sandwiches. • 236 Hartford Tpke., Vernon, (860) 872-6700 (woodntap.com). L D LS, $, WA

Windham County

85 Main • ***New American*** There's something for everybody at this Main Street fixture: from sushi to duck-liver pâté, pulled-pork barbecue to wild-mushroom ravioli. • 85 Main St., Putnam, (860) 928-1660 (85main.com). Open daily. L D LS, $$, WA

Bella's Bistro • ***Northern Italian*** An upscale spot with a seasonal menu serving veal, beef, chicken, pork, pizzas, seasonal fish, shrimp, mussels, scallops and lobster. • 75 Main St., Putnam, (860) 928-7343 (bellasbistromarket.com). Closed Mon. L D (Tues.-Sat.), $$, WA

The Courthouse Bar & Grill • ***American*** Serves 20 great appetizers plus "arresting" main courses such as seafood Alfredo and Montreal sirloin. • 121 Main St., Putnam, (860) 963-0074 (courthousebarandgrille.com). Open daily. L D LS (weekends), $, WA

Fiesta Cinco De Mayo • ***Mexican*** A festive spot offering pollo salsa verde, carne asada and great guacamole. • 1228 Main St., Willimantic, (860) 423-9524. Open daily. L D, $$, WA

Golden Lamb Buttery • ***American*** In a barn overlooking a 1,000-acre farm, dinner here might be roast duckling, chateubriand or honey-glazed rack of lamb. For dessert, there's strawberry-rhubarb bread pudding or lemon blueberry cake. • 199 Bush Hill Rd., Brooklyn, (860) 774-4423 (thegoldenlamb.com). Closed Sun.-Mon. L D (Fri.-Sat.), $$$, E, WA

Hank's Restaurant • ***American*** A family place serving home-style chowders, lobster salad rolls and prime rib. • 416 Providence Rd., Brooklyn, (860) 774-6071 (hanksrestaurant.com). Open daily. L D, $$

The Inn at Woodstock Hill • ***American*** The menu at this historic estate includes shrimp-and-sea-scallop stir-fry, fontina-stuffed veal tenderloin Serrano and duckling à l'orange. • 94 Plaine Hill Rd., Woodstock, (860) 928-0528 (woodstockhill.com). Open daily. L (Thurs.-Sat.) D SB, $$$, WA

J.D. Cooper's • ***American*** A sports pub with walls of sports memorabilia and 125 entrées from prime rib to fajitas to fresh fish. • 146 Park Rd., Putnam, (860) 928-0501. Open daily. L D, $, E (Sat.), WA

The Mansion at Bald Hill • ***American*** The pan-seared diver scallops with jumbo shrimp is tops, and don't skip the lobster mac 'n' cheese. • 29 Plaine Rd., South Woodstock, (860) 974-3456 (mansionatbaldhill.com). Closed Mon. D, $$$, WA

Mozzarella's Grill & Bar • ***American/Italian*** A great family restaurant with a warm, cozy atmosphere serving fresh burgers, steaks, seafood, and Italian specialties. • 460 Hartford Tpke., Dayville, (860) 774-3434 (mozzarellasgrill.com). Closed Fri.-Sun. B L D, $, E, WA

New Ocean Palace • ***Japanese*** Enjoy the tiger roll, mango chicken, crab rangoon and teriyaki beef. • 520A Providence Rd., Brooklyn, (860) 779-9699 (newoceanbrooklynct.com). Open daily. L (Mon.-Sat.) D, $, WA

Someplace Special Pizza • ***Italian*** Serves Greek-style pizza, steaks, seafood and pastas at reasonable prices. • 58 Main St., Putnam, (860) 928-2884 (someplacespecialrestaurant.com). Open daily. L D, $, WA

Thai Basil • ***Thai/Japanese*** Favorite dishes include Drunken Noodles, General Thai chicken, Thai Basil Farm and pad Thai, as well as Japanese hibachi steak and seafood dishes. • 187 North St., Danielson, (860) 774-1986 (thaibasilct.com). Open daily. L D, $, WA

Thai Place • ***Thai*** More than 100 authentic dishes including pad Thai, barbecued chicken and skewered satay with sweet nam jim kai sauce. • 214 Kennedy Dr., Putnam, (860) 963-7770 (www.thaiplaceputnam.com). Open daily. L D, $, WA

Tony's Pizza • ***Pizza*** With more than 30 years in business, Despina Loukas knows how to make pizzas. Customer favorites include crispy pepperoni and taco. • 117 Main St., Willimantic, (860) 423-7717 (tonyspizzaplace.com). Open daily. L D LS, $, WA

The Vanilla Bean Café • ***American*** A restaurant known for its homemade soups, award-winning chili, vegetarian dishes, and desserts. • Rtes. 44, 169 & 97, Pomfret, (860) 928-1562 (thevanillabeancafe.com). Open daily. B L D (Wed.-Sun.), $$, E, WA

Willimantic Brewing Co./Main Street Café • ***Brew Pub*** In a historic U.S. Post Office building, beers are brewed in full view of diners. Try the ale-steamed mussels. • 967 Main St., Willimantic, (860) 423-6777 (willibrew.com). Open daily. L (Tues.-Sun.) D, $$, WA

Yamato Hibachi & Sushi Restaurant • ***Japanese*** Serves freshly prepared seafood, steak, chicken and veggies cooked on hibachi grills. • 729 Hartford Pike, Dayville, (860) 774-7888 (yamatosushi.com). Open daily. L D, $$, WA

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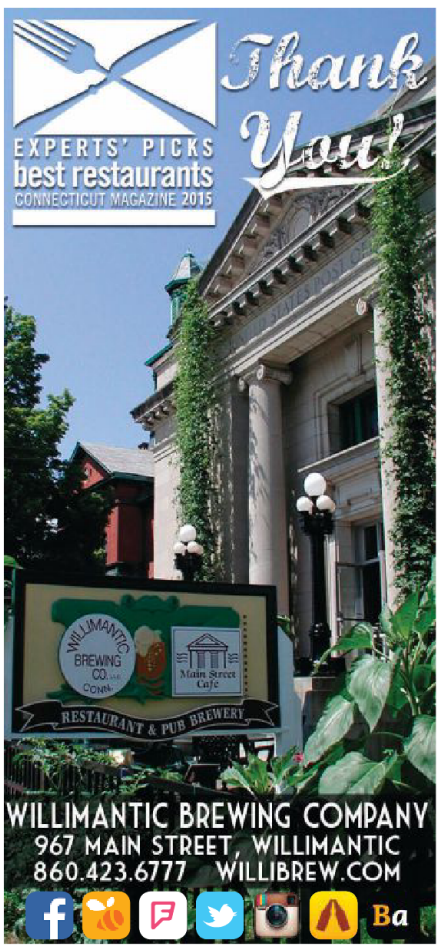

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best restaurants 2015
readers' choice

| CONTINUED FROM **PAGE 45** |

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best restaurants 2015

experts' picks

| CONTINUED FROM **PAGE 49** |

JULIE BIDWELL

experts' pick: best **seafood**

The Whelk, Westport

"**Chef-owner Bill Taibe must audition every fish he serves at his lively neo-mod clam shack on the river. We had the most beautiful trout we've ever seen or tasted here.**"

***Connecticut Magazine* Staff**

experts' picks: best **value**

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experts' picks: best **hotel dining**

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The White Hart, Salisbury
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MASTERPIECE CLASSIC'S "DOWNTON ABBEY" RETURNS

SEASON 5 PREMIERES SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 AT 9 P.M. ON CPTV

President's message

We at CPTV are excited to be kicking off a new year with new programs and initiatives we know our members will enjoy. Of course, this includes the kickoff of a new season of the *Masterpiece Classic* phenomenon "Downton Abbey," premiering Sunday, January 4 at 9 p.m. We know fans can't wait to see what happens next to their favorite characters, and we can't either!

Also premiering in January — on Thursday, January 8 at 8 p.m., to be exact — is a new season of the CPTV Original series *All Things Connecticut*, featuring a new host, David Bibbey. Follow David as he provides a fresh perspective on the people, places and things that make the Nutmeg State such a wonderful place to be!

We are also thrilled to be continuing our Made in Connecticut initiative in 2015. Launched last spring, this initiative of the Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network celebrates Connecticut's manufacturing and technology future, from high-tech to hand-made. We are thrilled to be entering another year of this campaign celebrating and exploring homegrown industry. Airing in conjunction with this initiative, don't miss "Made in the U.S.A.," part of the *America Revealed* series, on Monday, January 5 at 10 p.m. Plus, catch all-new vignettes showcasing local manufacturing airing on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, leading into *PBS NewsHour,* beginning January 8. The Made in Connecticut initiative is made possible by Founding Sponsor KBE Building Corporation, with additional funding from the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA). For more information, visit MadeinCT.CPTV.org.

In other great news, CPBN recently received a grant in the amount of $250,000 from Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), a non-profit veteran service organization whose mission is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. This is the second grant CPBN has received from WWP to help us advance CPBN's Veterans Vocational Training Program (VVTP). This program, part of the Institute for Advanced Media (IAM), is a private occupational training school that allows adult learners to receive training from industry experts and gain 21st-century digital workforce skills. The program provides career training to veterans, as well as their spouses and caregivers. We are grateful to WWP for recognizing our efforts with this grant, and we know it will help us change the lives of even more of our service members who have given so much for us.

And speaking of giving, thank you to you, our members; your support makes all of this possible. Happy New Year to you and yours!

Jerry Franklin
President and CEO, Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network

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What's On! cptv4U

CPTV4U's Evening Program Schedule

For CPTV4U's all-day listings, visit CPTV.org and click the "Schedules" tab.

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6:00 p.m.	Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.	PBS NewsHour	PBS NewsHour	PBS NewsHour	PBS NewsHour	PBS NewsHour	History & Science Programming (Includes The Jewel in the Crown, airing 6-8 p.m. on January 10, after which it airs Saturdays, 7-8 p.m.**)
6:30 p.m.							
7:00 p.m.	Antiques Roadshow	Built to Last	The Great British Baking Show	Getting Away Together	This Old House Hour	Sacred Journeys with Bruce Feiler (World of Stonehenge airs January 2, 7-8 p.m.)	
7:30 p.m.		Hometime		Rick Steves' Europe			
8:00 p.m.	Front and Center	Nature	Call the Midwife (The Manners of Downton Abbey: A Masterpiece Special airs January 6, 8-9 p.m.)	Antiques Roadshow	Market Warriors	NOVA	Foyle's War
8:30 p.m.							
9:00 p.m.	Austin City Limits	Nature	Tuesday Night Drama Programming (Includes episodes of Masterpiece Classic: Downton Abbey, Season 5, airing at 9 p.m., followed by Manor of Speaking*)	Wednesday Night History Programming	Thursday Night Independent Films & Documentaries	Friday Night Science Programming	Foyle's War
9:30 p.m.							
10:00 p.m.	Sunday Night Music Programming	Globe Trekker					Inspector Morse
10:30 p.m.							
11:00 p.m.		Charlie Rose	Charlie Rose	Charlie Rose	Charlie Rose	Charlie Rose	Scott & Bailey
11:30 p.m.							

* For more information on *Manor of Speaking*, see *Program Picks*, page 72.
** For more information on *The Jewel in the Crown*, see *Program Picks*, page 72.

WNPR Business Reporting
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January Highlights

Visit CPTVSports.org for dates and times for exciting sports events throughout the month, including:

*** Boys and Girls High School Basketball**

*** Boys High School Ice Hockey**

*** New Episodes of *Beyond the Beat* and *GameTime***

cptv

(Check local listings for channel information.)

The Great British Baking Show
Saturdays at 1 p.m.

This new competition series — wildly popular in the U.K. — comes to America, and to CPTV! Follow a group of amateur bakers (pictured) who all hope to be named the U.K.'s best. Each week, they tackle a different skill, the difficulty of which increases as the weeks unfold. Watch as they take on breads, cakes, pastries and more, and see who will be crowned the winner at the end of the competition!

***Antiques Roadshow*, Season 19**
Mondays at 8 p.m.

PBS's most-watched series returns with new episodes Mondays at 8 p.m., followed by encore presentations of popular episodes at 9 p.m. Explore a whole new season of fascinating items from around the nation, kicking off with *Roadshow*'s three-part visit to New York City, where finds include a rare baseball card collection.

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Manor of Speaking
Tuesdays at 10 p.m.
(Airs at 10:30 p.m. on January 6)

Following Season 5 episodes of *Masterpiece Classic*'s "Downton Abbey," airing Tuesdays at 9 p.m. on CPTV4U, catch this new series in which host Ernie Manouse (pictured) leads a studio audience and a cast of fans and cultural experts through "Downton Abbey." With episode recaps, surprise guests and more, this is an after-show like no other!

The Jewel in the Crown
Saturdays at 7 p.m., Beginning With a Two-Hour Premiere at 6 p.m. on January 10

Based on Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet* novels, this series, first broadcast in 1984, has been remastered for a new generation of viewers. Full of drama, action and romance, it recounts the final days of the British Raj in India during World War II.

cptvKids

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY

6:30 AM	Arthur *	12:30 PM	Thomas & Friends
7:00	Odd Squad *	1:00	Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood
7:30	Wild Kratts *	1:30	Caillou
8:00	Curious George *	2:00	Super Why!
8:30	The Cat in the Hat *	2:30	Dinosaur Train
9:00	Peg + Cat	3:00	Peg + Cat
9:30	Dinosaur Train	3:30	The Cat in the Hat
10:00	Sesame Street	4:00	Curious George *
11:00	Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood	4:30	Odd Squad * *
11:30	Super Why!	5:00	Wild Kratts *
Noon	Sid the Science Kid	5:30	Wild Kratts

* *Arthur* airs weekdays at 6:30 a.m. beginning January 5.

* On January 19, *Odd Squad Saves the World* airs at 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

* On January 23, *Odd Squad Saves the World* airs at 7 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Catch New Episodes of *Odd Squad*, Including the Premiere of *Odd Squad Saves the World*

Odd Squad, the newest addition to the CPTV Kids lineup, follows two young government agents, Olive and Otto, as they use math skills and collaboration to investigate unusual phenomena.

On Monday, January 19, *Odd Squad* kicks off a week of new episodes with an hour-long special event, *Odd Squad Saves the World*, in which the agents face four new adventures. First, in "Rise of the Hydraclops," Olive and Otto must locate a treasure chest. Then, in "Recipe for Disaster," Otto and Olive explain to Ms. O how a case went wrong — each in their own way. In "Dance Like Nobody's Watching," the team must avoid a series of booby traps. And in "O Is Not for Old," the agents throw a surprise party for Ms. O.

Odd Squad Saves the World will premiere on CPTV Kids at 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on January 19, with encore broadcasts airing Friday, January 23 at 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. Plus, on Tuesday, January 20, Wednesday, January 21 and Thursday, January 22, new half-hour episodes of the show will air at their regularly scheduled times, 7 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

For more information on *Odd Squad*, including a link to *Odd Squad* games and activities, visit CPTV.org/programs/Odd-Squad.

Shown from left are Allen Leech as Tom Branson, Tom Cullen as Lord Gillingham and Michelle Dockery as Lady Mary.

It's Time to Return to Downton Abbey

Season 5 Comes to CPTV Sundays at 9 p.m. Beginning January 4

The beloved *Masterpiece Classic* series "Downton Abbey" returns to CPTV with an all-new season premiering Sunday, January 4.

A Carnival Films/*Masterpiece* co-production, "Downton Abbey" has received numerous awards and accolades, including 10 Primetime Emmy Awards®, two Golden Globes® and a Screen Actors Guild Award® for the ensemble cast.

Now, Season 5 comes to CPTV with even more dark secrets, budding romances and dramatic turns. Fans will be reintroduced to their favorite characters: Robert, Lord Grantham (Hugh Bonneville); Cora, Countess of Grantham (Elizabeth McGovern); Lady Mary (Michelle Dockery); Lady Edith (Laura Carmichael); and Violet, Dowager Countess of Grantham (Dame Maggie Smith), as well as many others — including members of the house staff, led as always by Mr. Carson (Jim Carter) and Mrs. Hughes (Phyllis Logan).

Watch as these characters continue to learn and grow, from Robert, who finds himself snubbed by the village; to Violet, who is reunited with someone dear to her from her past; to Daisy (Sophie McShera), who seeks to expand her horizons. Meanwhile, relationships are put to the test, several members of the household lock horns and some long-simmering secrets are finally brought to light.

Plus, several new characters will join the cast: Richard E. Grant (*Gosford Park, Doctor Who*) plays Simon Bricker, a guest of the Granthams; Anna Chancellor (*The Hour, Four Weddings and a Funeral*) plays Lady Anstruther; and Rade Sherbedgia (*Eyes Wide Shut, 24*) plays a Russian refugee. Additionally, returning guest cast member Dame Harriet Walter reprises her role as Lady Shackleton, and Peter Egan returns as Lord Flintshire.

Following the season premiere on January 4, CPTV will air *The Manners of Downton Abbey: A Masterpiece Special*, hosted by Alastair Bruce, historical advisor to "Downton Abbey." He reveals how the aristocratic set dined and dressed, how they married, how they interacted with the servants and why they behaved as they did in 1900s Britain. This special includes revealing interviews with many members of the "Downton Abbey" cast!

Also in January, CPTV Premieres *All Things Connecticut*, Season 6

New Episodes Air Thursdays at 8 p.m. Beginning January 8

The CPTV Original series *All Things Connecticut* returns with a season of 10 new episodes, plus a new host: David Bibbey. David is British, and he's moved his family across the pond to make Connecticut his home — and to make *All Things Connecticut* a little zanier!

From the back of a London taxi to the sidecar of a motorcycle, David leaps at unusual opportunities to explore the unexplored. Traveling by plane, helicopter, boat, kayak and even tandem bicycle, David seeks out the Nutmeg State's most fascinating people, places and things, and he takes viewers along for the ride! Along the way, he provides a fresh perspective.

"How often do you find yourself driving by the same place day after day and not taking the time to explore what's inside, the history behind it or the great people and characters you find along the way?," David asked. Well, he is prepared to help change that!

New episodes of *All Things Connecticut* air Thursday nights at 8 p.m., with encore airings Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. and Sundays at 12:30 p.m., only on CPTV.

cptv Primetime

CPTV Early Prime Monday Through Friday, unless otherwise noted:

6:00 pm BBC World News
6:30 Nightly Business Report
7:00 PBS NewsHour

CPTV Original, CPTV National Production or Presentation or CPTV Co-production indicated in blue.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1

6:30 am Sesame Street
7:00 Odd Squad
7:30 Wild Kratts
8:00 Curious George
8:30 The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!
9:00 Peg + Cat
9:30 Dinosaur Train
10:00 Antiques Roadshow
Manor House Treasures This special episode features incredible items that would fit right in at the stately homes of the rich and powerful.
11:00 Secrets of the Manor House
Explore how the British titled class, as well as their servants, lived in Edwardian times.
12:00 Secrets of Highclere Castle
The behind-the-scenes story of one of England's most spectacular country homes, the site where "Downton Abbey" is filmed, is shared.
1:00 pm -- 11:30 pm: Masterpiece Classic — Downton Abbey, Season 4 Marathon
Celebrate New Year's Day and get ready for the fifth season of "Downton Abbey" as all eight Season 4 episodes air back-to-back.
11:30 Antiques Roadshow
Manor House Treasures (See January 1 at 10 a.m.)
(12:30 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2

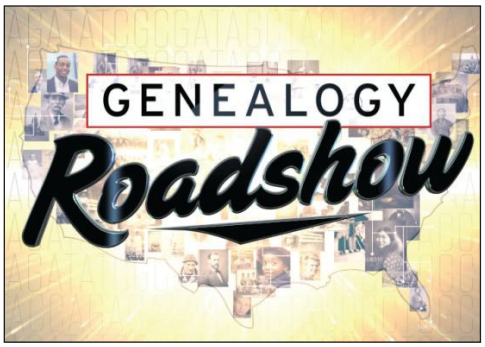
8:00 Midsomer Murders
The Killings at Badger's Drift Revisit the first season of this British detective series. In this two-part episode, DCI Barnaby and Detective Sergeant Troy investigate the murder of an elderly woman, uncovering a web of sinister events. Part 1 of 2.
9:00 Masterpiece Mystery!
Endeavour, Season 2: Trove A dead man's mysterious final message leads Morse to believe the death was not a routine suicide.
10:30 Scott & Bailey
An adult film actress is arrested on suspicion of killing her husband.
11:30 Bluegrass Underground
(12 am - 6:30 am: CPTV All Night)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3

6:30 am Sesame Street
7:00 Wild Kratts
7:30 Thomas & Friends
8:00 Word World
8:30 Biz Kid$
9:00 Everyday Edisons
9:30 Getting Away Together
10:00 Rick Steves' Europe
10:30 Antiques Roadshow
Manor House Treasures (See January 1 at 10 a.m.)
11:30 This Old House Hour
12:30 Growing a Greener World
1:00 The Great British Baking Show
Cake (See *Program Picks*, page 72.)
2:00 America's Test Kitchen
2:30 Cook's Country Kitchen
3:00 Martha Stewart's Cooking School
3:30 Martha Bakes
4:00 Jacques Pepin: More Fast Food My Way
4:30 Simply Ming
5:00 Lidia's Kitchen
5:30 A Moveable Feast
6:00 Hometime
6:30 Ask This Old House
7:00 This Old House
7:30 American Masters
Carol Burnett: A Woman of Character Examine the legendary entertainer's career, difficult childhood and the dramatic turn that followed her TV variety show.
9:00 Carol Burnett: The Mark Twain Prize
Julie Andrews, Tim Conway, Tina Fey and others celebrate comedic icon Carol Burnett.
11:00 Antiques Roadshow
Phoenix, Arizona, Part 2
(12 am - 6:30 am: CPTV All Night)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4

6:30 am Angelina Ballerina: The Next Steps
7:00 Curious George
7:30 The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!
8:00 Signing Time
8:30 Design Squad
9:00 Charlie Rose: The Week
9:30 Religion & Ethics Newsweekly
10:00 Washington Week
10:30 Start Up
11:00 Consuelo Mack WealthTrack
11:30 To the Contrary
12:00 The McLaughlin Group
12:30 Great Performances
From Vienna: The New Year's Celebration 2015 The tradition of ringing in the new year at the Musikverein with the Vienna Philharmonic continues, this year under guest conductor Zubin Mehta and accompanied by the Vienna State Ballet. Julie Andrews hosts.
2:00 American Masters
Carol Burnett: A Woman of Character (See January 3 at 7:30 p.m.)
3:30 American Woodshop



Genealogy Roadshow, Season 2
Tuesdays at 8 p.m. Beginning January 13

This "next-generation genealogy show" returns with an all-new season. *Genealogy Roadshow* travels the nation, taking a historical look into one community at a time by exploring the genealogy of that community's citizens. In each episode, experts work with six local participants, guiding each one through his or her family's genetic heritage and connecting many of them with significant events and people from the past. (And don't forget to catch new episodes of that other *Roadshow* — *Antiques Roadshow* — Mondays at 8 p.m. beginning January 5!)

4:00 Woodsmith Shop
4:30 Hometime
5:00 Ask This Old House
5:30 This Old House
6:00 Antiques Roadshow
Manor House Treasures (See January 1 at 10 a.m.)
7:00 Israel: The Royal Tour
An all-access tour of Israel is guided by its head of state, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.
8:00 Secrets of the Manor House
(See January 1 at 11 a.m.)
9:00 Masterpiece Classic
Downton Abbey, Season 5 Part 1 of 9. (See *Feature*, page 73.)
10:15 The Manners of Downton Abbey: A Masterpiece Special
(See *Feature*, page 73.)
11:15 Midsomer Murders
The Killings at Badger's Drift Part 1 of 2. (See January 2 at 8 p.m.)
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

MONDAY, JANUARY 5

8:00 Antiques Roadshow
New York City, Part 1 (See *Program Picks*, page 72.)
9:00 Antiques Roadshow
Phoenix, Arizona, Part 3
10:00 America Revealed
Made in the U.S.A. American manufacturing has undergone a revolution over the past 20 years, becoming the world's number-one manufacturing nation. Cross the country to look at traditional and not-so-traditional types of manufacturing.
11:00 Independent Lens
Rich Hill Three boys navigate the road between childhood and adolescence in a depressed Missouri town.
(12:30 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6

8:00 Breaking and Entering
This award-winning documentary looks at why competitors attempt to break Guinness World Records.

9:00 Ripley: Believe It or Not: American Experience
Learn how the eccentric Robert Ripley grew his obsession with the odd into an entertainment empire with this new, in-depth profile.

10:00 Frontline
Gunned Down: The Power of the NRA This new film investigates how the NRA uses its political power to stop gun regulation. Learn why, despite the national trauma over gun violence, Washington hasn't acted.

11:00 1964 World's Fair
The sights and sounds of the exhibition that symbolized the epitome of innovation are showcased.

(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7

8:00 Nature
Wild France Breathtaking photography reveals wolves, boars and bears living in France's mountains and forests in this new episode of *Nature*.

9:00 NOVA
Rise of the Drones Learn how the explosive growth of airborne, pilotless drones is transforming the armed forces of every nation.

10:00 Nazi Mega Weapons
Season 2: V1 - Hitler's Vengeance Missile The Nazis built some of the biggest, deadliest pieces of military hardware and most malevolent technology in history. These weapons and their impact on warfare are explored in new episodes of *Nazi Mega Weapons,* airing Wednesdays at 10 p.m.

11:00 Nazi Mega Weapons
Season 1: V2 Rocket In this encore episode, learn how German rocket scientist Werner von Braun heralded the birth of ballistic missiles.

(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8

8:00 All Things Connecticut
Part 1 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)

8:30 Father Brown
The Ghost in the Machine CPTV airs encore presentations of Season 2 episodes of *Father Brown*. In this episode, Father Brown is approached by a parishioner who thinks she is being haunted by her sister, who went missing long ago.

9:30 Masterpiece Mystery!
Miss Marple, Season 7: A Caribbean Mystery While staying at a tropical island hotel, Miss Marple investigates the death of a fellow guest.

11:00 Midsomer Murders
The Killings at Badger's Drift Part 1 of 2. (See January 2 at 8 p.m.)

(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9

8:00 Midsomer Murders
The Killings at Badger's Drift Part 2 of 2. (See January 2 at 8 p.m.)

9:00 Masterpiece Mystery!
Endeavour, Season 2: Nocturne When an elderly man is murdered, the investigation leads to a dreary school for girls.

10:30 Scott & Bailey
Janet moves closer to finding Veronica's killer.

11:30 Bluegrass Underground

(12 am - 6:30 am: CPTV All Night)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10

6:30 am Sesame Street
7:00 Wild Kratts
7:30 Thomas & Friends
8:00 Word World
8:30 Biz Kid$
9:00 Everyday Edisons
9:30 Getting Away Together
10:00 Rick Steves' Europe
10:30 All Things Connecticut
Part 1 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)

11:00 Connecticut's Cultural Treasures
Cultural Destinations: The First Five Tour some of the Nutmeg State's most unique, culturally relevant destinations, from museums to scenic parks and beyond!

11:30 This Old House Hour
12:30 Growing a Greener World
1:00 The Great British Baking Show
Biscuits (See *Program Picks*, page 72.)
2:00 America's Test Kitchen
2:30 Cook's Country Kitchen
3:00 Martha Stewart's Cooking School
3:30 Martha Bakes
4:00 Jacques Pepin: More Fast Food My Way
4:30 Simply Ming
5:00 Lidia's Kitchen
5:30 A Moveable Feast
6:00 Hometime
6:30 Ask This Old House
7:00 This Old House
7:30 Viewers' Favorites
CPTV showcases some of its most popular educational programs, music specials and other shows that the whole family can enjoy.

9:30 Great Performances
Cats Andrew Lloyd Webber's blockbuster musical *Cats* returns in high definition and digital sound to *Great Performances*, where it had its 1998 world television premiere. This performance, filmed at London's Adelphi Theatre in 1997, now looks and sounds better than ever.

11:30 The Manners of Downton Abbey: A Masterpiece Special
(See *Feature*, page 73.)

(12:30 am - 6:30 am: CPTV All Night)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11

6:30 am Angelina Ballerina: The Next Steps
7:00 Curious George
7:30 The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!
8:00 Signing Time
8:30 Design Squad

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9:00 **Charlie Rose: The Week**
9:30 **Religion & Ethics Newsweekly**
10:00 **Washington Week**
10:30 **Start Up**
11:00 **Consuelo Mack WealthTrack**
11:30 **To the Contrary**
12:00 **The McLaughlin Group**
12:30 **All Things Connecticut**
Part 1 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)
1:00 **Ripley: Believe It or Not: American Experience**
(See January 6 at 9 p.m.)
2:00 **Israel: The Royal Tour**
(See January 4 at 7 p.m.)
3:00 **Home of the Brave: When Southbury Said No to the Nazis**
Learn how residents of the Connecticut town of Southbury kept a Nazi training camp from being built in their midst in 1937.
3:30 **American Woodshop**
4:00 **Woodsmith Shop**
4:30 **Hometime**
5:00 **Ask This Old House**
5:30 **This Old House**
6:00 **Breaking and Entering**
(See January 6 at 8 p.m.)
7:00 **Father Brown**
The Ghost in the Machine (See January 8 at 8:30 p.m.)
8:00 **Call the Midwife**
CPTV encores Season 3 of *Call the Midwife*. In this episode, the nuns and midwives move into their new premises. Part 1 of 8.
9:00 **Masterpiece Classic**
Downton Abbey, Season 5 Part 2 of 9. (See *Feature*, page 73.)
10:00 **The Queen's Garden**
This new film goes inside 39 acres of a secret wildlife haven like no other. Explore the most biodiverse place in central London, all belonging to Queen Elizabeth II.
11:00 **Midsomer Murders**
The Killings at Badger's Drift Part 2 of 2. (See January 2 at 8 p.m.)
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

MONDAY, JANUARY 12

8:00 **Antiques Roadshow**
New York City, Part 2 (See *Program Picks*, page 72.)
9:00 **Bala Brothers**
In this national premiere event, three gifted South African brothers perform a mix of South African-influenced music, as well as songs from *The Lion King*, Paul Simon and more.
10:30 **Independent Lens**
Evolution of a Criminal Filmmaker Darius Clark Monroe explores what led him to rob a bank as a teenager.
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13

8:00 **Genealogy Roadshow**
New Orleans — Cabildo (See *Highlight*, page 74.)
9:00 **Klansville, U.S.A.: American Experience**
The reasons North Carolina became home to the largest Klan organization in America are examined in this new film from *American Experience.*
10:00 **The '60s in Connecticut**
This documentary takes an in-depth look at the turbulent 1960s through the eyes of Connecticut residents.
11:00 **Frontline**
Putin's Way This new film investigates the accusations of criminality and corruption that have surrounded Vladimir Putin's reign in Russia.
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14

8:00 **Nature**
Dogs That Changed the World, Part 1: The Rise of the Dog This two-part special explores the evolution of dogs and traces how they infiltrated human society.
9:00 **NOVA**
The Big Bang Machine Physicists attempt to close in on the mysterious Higgs boson.

Masterpiece Mystery!: "Grantchester"

Sundays at 10 p.m. Beginning January 18

In this new series from *Masterpiece Mystery!*, James Norton (*Belle*) stars as Sidney Chambers, a young and charismatic vicar who turns amateur investigator when one of his parishioners dies under suspicious circumstances. He asks gruff police inspector Geordie Keating (Robson Green, *Masterpiece*'s "Reckless") for help, and the two become crime-solving partners and friends in the hamlet of Grantchester.

10:00 **Nazi Mega Weapons**
Season 2: The Wolf's Lair (See January 7 at 10 p.m.)
11:00 **Nazi Mega Weapons**
Season 1: Fortress Berlin In April 1945, Hitler was 10 meters underground in the center of Berlin as the Russians advanced.
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15

8:00 **All Things Connecticut**
Part 2 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)
8:30 **Father Brown**
The Maddest of All Father Brown investigates a psychiatric facility.

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9:30 Masterpiece Mystery!
Miss Marple, Season 7: Greenshaw's Folly An old friend who works for an eccentric botanist turns to Miss Marple for help.
11:00 Midsomer Murders
The Killings at Badger's Drift Part 2 of 2. (See January 2 at 8 p.m.)
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16

8:00 Midsomer Murders
Written in Blood Barnaby and Troy investigate the murder of the secretary of a writers circle. Part 1 of 2.
9:00 Masterpiece Mystery!
Endeavour, Season 2: Sway Morse and Thursday race against time to uncover the identity of the Oxford Strangler.
10:30 Scott & Bailey
Rachel is almost hit by a car and learns the incident is linked to information she has uncovered.
11:30 Bluegrass Underground
(12 am - 6:30 am: CPTV All Night)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17

6:30 am Sesame Street
7:00 Wild Kratts
7:30 Thomas & Friends
8:00 Word World
8:30 Biz Kid$
9:00 Everyday Edisons
9:30 Getting Away Together
10:00 Rick Steves' Europe
10:30 All Things Connecticut
Part 2 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)
11:00 Connecticut's Cultural Treasures
Imagination and Innovation (See January 10 at 11 a.m.)
11:30 This Old House Hour
12:30 Growing a Greener World
1:00 The Great British Baking Show
Bread (See *Program Picks*, page 72.)
2:00 America's Test Kitchen
2:30 Cook's Country Kitchen
3:00 Martha Stewart's Cooking School
3:30 Martha Bakes
4:00 Jacques Pepin: More Fast Food My Way
4:30 Simply Ming
5:00 Lidia's Kitchen
5:30 A Moveable Feast
6:00 Hometime
6:30 Ask This Old House
7:00 This Old House
7:30 Bluegrass Underground
8:00 Carole King: The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize In Performance at the White House
President Obama, Billy Joel, James Taylor and others celebrate the career of Carole King as she receives the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song.
9:00 Billy Joel: The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize
Billy Joel is honored as the recipient of the 2014 Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song. Featured performers in this special include Joel himself, as well as Tony Bennett, Josh Groban, Natalie Maines and many others.
10:30 Billy Joel: A Matter of Trust — The Bridge to Russia Concert
Billy Joel performs many of his hits and connects with the Russian people in this historic 1987 concert event.
11:30 How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin
This special sheds light on the Fab Four's profound influence in the USSR and how that influence contributed to the fall of Communism.
(12:30 am - 6:30 am: CPTV All Night)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18

6:30 am Angelina Ballerina: The Next Steps
7:00 Curious George
7:30 The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!
8:00 Signing Time
8:30 Design Squad
9:00 Charlie Rose: The Week
9:30 Religion & Ethics Newsweekly
10:00 Washington Week
10:30 Start Up
11:00 Consuelo Mack WealthTrack
11:30 To the Contrary
12:00 The McLaughlin Group
12:30 All Things Connecticut
Part 2 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)
1:00 The '60s in Connecticut
(See January 13 at 10 p.m.)
2:00 Masterpiece Mystery!
Miss Marple, Season 7: Greenshaw's Folly (See January 15 at 9:30 p.m.)
3:30 American Woodshop
4:00 Woodsmith Shop
4:30 Hometime
5:00 Ask This Old House
5:30 This Old House
6:00 The Real McCoy
(See January 12 at 10 p.m.)
7:00 Father Brown
The Maddest of All (See January 15 at 8:30 p.m.)
8:00 Call the Midwife
Trixie is upset when Jenny is promoted to acting sister. Part 2 of 8.
9:00 Masterpiece Classic
Downton Abbey, Season 5 Part 3 of 9. (See *Feature*, page 73.)
10:00 Masterpiece Mystery!
Grantchester Part 1 of 6. (See *Highlight*, page 76.)
11:00 Midsomer Murders
Written in Blood Part 1 of 2. (See January 16 at 8 p.m.)
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

MONDAY, JANUARY 19

8:00 Antiques Roadshow
New York City, Part 3 (See *Program Picks*, page 72.)
9:00 Antiques Roadshow
San José, California, Part 2

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10:00 Rickover: The Birth of Nuclear Power
Meet the man behind the first nuclear-powered submarine and nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 20

8:00 Genealogy Roadshow
St. Louis — Central Library (See *Highlight*, page 74.)
9:00 Edison: American Experience
Thomas Edison, remembered as a genius who helped create the modern world, is profiled in this new film.
11:00 History Detectives
A phonograph believed to have been made by Thomas Edison to record messages from the dead is examined.
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21

8:00 Nature
Dogs That Changed the World, Part 2: Dogs by Design (See January 14 at 8 p.m.)
9:00 NOVA
Sunken Ship Rescue The operation to raise and salvage the capsized Costa Concordia cruise ship is chronicled.
10:00 Nazi Mega Weapons
Season 2: The SS (See January 7 at 10 p.m.)
11:00 Hindenburg and Hitler: The Making of a Fuehrer
Follow the political career of Paul von Hindenburg, Germany's chancellor from 1925 to 1934.
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22

8:00 All Things Connecticut
Part 3 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)
8:30 Father Brown
The Pride of the Prydes The public opening of Pryde Castle is cut short when a guide is killed by an arrow.
9:30 Masterpiece Mystery!
Miss Marple, Season 7: Endless Night Miss Marple investigates several deaths believed to have been caused by a gypsy curse.
11:00 Midsomer Murders
Written in Blood Part 1 of 2. (See January 16 at 8 p.m.)
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23

8:00 Midsomer Murders
Written in Blood Part 2 of 2. (See January 16 at 8 p.m.)
9:00 Masterpiece Mystery!
Endeavour, Season 2: Neverland Morse investigates the cases of a missing boy, a dead journalist and an absconder from a prison.
10:30 Scott & Bailey
The detectives work to uncover who killed two people found dead.
11:30 Bluegrass Underground
(12 am - 6:30 am: CPTV All Night)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24

6:30 am Sesame Street
7:00 Wild Kratts
7:30 Thomas & Friends
8:00 Word World
8:30 Biz Kid$
9:00 Everyday Edisons
9:30 Getting Away Together
10:00 Rick Steves' Europe
10:30 All Things Connecticut
Part 3 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)
11:00 Give It All Away: Newman's Own Recipe for Success
This film documents the late Paul Newman's legacy of giving and the ongoing positive impact of Newman's Own Foundation.
11:30 This Old House Hour
12:30 Growing a Greener World
1:00 The Great British Baking Show
Desserts (See *Program Picks*, page 72.)
2:00 America's Test Kitchen
2:30 Cook's Country Kitchen
3:00 Martha Stewart's Cooking School
3:30 Martha Bakes
4:00 Jacques Pepin: More Fast Food My Way
4:30 Simply Ming
5:00 Lidia's Kitchen
5:30 A Moveable Feast
6:00 Hometime
6:30 Ask This Old House
7:00 This Old House
7:30 Viewers' Favorites
(See January 10 at 7:30 p.m.)
9:00 Secrets of Althorp — The Spencers
The brother of Diana, Princess of Wales, gives a personal tour around the Spencer family's manor.
10:00 Secrets of Chatsworth
Learn about the fascinating 500-year history of Chatsworth House and its connections to America.
11:00 Antiques Roadshow
New York City, Part 3 (See *Program Picks*, page 72.)
(12 am - 6:30 am: CPTV All Night)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

6:30 am Angelina Ballerina: The Next Steps
7:00 Curious George
7:30 The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!
8:00 Signing Time
8:30 Design Squad
9:00 Charlie Rose: The Week
9:30 Religion & Ethics Newsweekly
10:00 Washington Week
10:30 Start Up
11:00 Consuelo Mack WealthTrack
11:30 To the Contrary
12:00 The McLaughlin Group
12:30 All Things Connecticut
Part 3 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)
1:00 Rickover: The Birth of Nuclear Power
(See January 19 at 10 p.m.)

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3:00 USS Nautilus
This documentary explores the first nuclear submarine's roles in both the Cold War and nuclear power.
3:30 American Woodshop
4:00 Woodsmith Shop
4:30 Hometime
5:00 Ask This Old House
5:30 This Old House
6:00 NOVA
Sunken Ship Rescue (See January 21 at 9 p.m.)
7:00 Father Brown
The Pride of the Prydes (See January 22 at 8:30 p.m.)
8:00 Call the Midwife
Sister Julienne helps a pregnant prison inmate. Part 3 of 8.
9:00 Masterpiece Classic
Downton Abbey, Season 5 Part 4 of 9. (See *Feature*, page 73.)
10:00 Masterpiece Mystery!
Grantchester Part 2 of 6. (See *Highlight*, page 76.)
11:00 Midsomer Murders
Written in Blood Part 2 of 2. (See January 16 at 8 p.m.)
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

MONDAY, JANUARY 26

8:00 Antiques Roadshow
Austin, Texas, Part 1 (See *Program Picks*, page 72.)
9:00 Antiques Roadshow
San José, California, Part 3
10:00 Railroad Man: The Life & Legend of Jay Gould
Entrepreneur Jay Gould, creator of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Western Union Telegraph Company, is profiled.
11:00 Give It All Away: Newman's Own Recipe for Success
(See January 24 at 11 a.m.)
11:30 A Path Appears
In this new series, journalist Nicholas Kristof and special guests meet activists combatting gender oppression and human rights violations around the U.S. and the world. Part 1 of 3.
(1 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

8:00 Genealogy Roadshow
Philadelphia — Franklin Institute (See *Highlight*, page 74.)
9:00 Henry Ford: American Experience
Explore the life of Henry Ford, who transformed millions of lives and the nature of manufacturing in America.
11:00 Frontline
Firestone and the Warlord The relationship between the company Firestone and Liberian warlord Charles Taylor is investigated.
(12:30 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28

8:00 Nature
Penguin Post Office There's a post office on the Antarctic Peninsula surrounded by 3,000 gentoo penguins. This film documents their adventures.
9:00 NOVA
Sinkholes — Buried Alive Sinkholes, hazards that lurk wherever limestone bedrock is found, are investigated.
10:00 Secrets of the Dead
Ben Franklin's Bones Bones found in Benjamin Franklin's British residence were used in an illegal anatomy school.
11:00 Secrets of the Dead
Lost in the Amazon Percy Fawcett, a colonel and adventurer, disappeared while searching for a city of gold in Brazil in 1925.
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

8:00 All Things Connecticut
Part 4 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)
8:30 Father Brown
The Shadow of the Scaffold Father Brown tries to prove the innocence of a convicted killer granted a temporary reprieve from the gallows.
9:30 Death in Paradise
A guest at DI Richard Poole's university reunion party is murdered.
10:30 Midsomer Murders
Written in Blood Part 2 of 2. (See January 16 at 8 p.m.)
11:30 This Old House
(12 am - 7 am: CPTV All Night)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30

8:00 Midsomer Murders
Death of a Hollow Man A production of *Amadeus* reveals a backstage world of murder. Part 1 of 2.
9:00 Masterpiece Mystery!
Wallander, Series 3: An Event in Autumn Wallander's newly peaceful life is disturbed when a corpse is found on his property.
10:30 Scott & Bailey
The team breaks the silence maintained by their four murder suspects.
11:30 Bluegrass Underground
(12 am - 6:30 am: CPTV All Night)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

6:30 am Sesame Street
7:00 Wild Kratts
7:30 Thomas & Friends
8:00 Word World
8:30 Biz Kid$
9:00 Everyday Edisons
9:30 Getting Away Together
10:00 Rick Steves' Europe
10:30 All Things Connecticut
Part 4 of 10. (See *All Things Connecticut*, page 73.)
11:00 Connecticut's Cultural Treasures
Opening Doors to Cultural Awareness (See January 10 at 11 a.m.)
11:30 This Old House Hour
12:30 Growing a Greener World
1:00 The Great British Baking Show
Pies & Tarts (See *Program Picks*, page 72.)
2:00 America's Test Kitchen
2:30 Cook's Country Kitchen
3:00 Martha Stewart's Cooking School
3:30 Martha Bakes
4:00 Jacques Pepin: More Fast Food My Way
4:30 Simply Ming
5:00 Lidia's Kitchen
5:30 A Moveable Feast
6:00 Hometime
6:30 Ask This Old House
7:00 This Old House
7:30 Bluegrass Underground
8:00 Edward VIII — The Nazi King
An FBI report from 1941 details how the Duke and Duchess of Windsor harbored pro-Nazi sympathies.
9:00 Wallis Simpson: The Secret Letters
A trove of secret letters written by Wallis Simpson shed light on her marriage to Edward VIII.
10:00 Royals at War 1939-1945
Learn how members of the royal family helped boost their subjects' morale during World War II.
11:00 The Queen's Garden
(See January 11 at 10 p.m.)
(12 am - 6:30 am: CPTV All Night)

Lydia Sherman: The Derby Poisoner

THE TRUE BUT MOSTLY FORGOTTEN STORY OF ONE OF THE STATE'S FIRST FEMALE MASS MURDERERS.

With the seemingly endless abundance of true crime shows on TV, it seems remarkable that one of the most sensational and unusual murderers in Connecticut history has been essentially forgotten, but so seems to be the 1860-'70s story of Lydia Sherman—also popularly known as "America's Queen Killer," "The Poison Fiend," "The Modern-Day Lucretia Borgia" or simply, "The Derby Poisoner."

And yes, to have gained such a reputation, Lydia's killing spree was both truly astonishing and gut-wrenchingly horrible. Okay, she murdered a husband (or three, as it turns out), which although terrible, paled to the unimaginable cruelty of also poisoning eight children—including six (!) of her own.

Of course, like many monsters, her benign countenance belied the evil within. A slim woman with chestnut hair, blue eyes and alabaster skin, she relied on her good looks and charms to cover her heinous acts. Her beauty was what attracted her first husband, Edward Struck, a widower with six children who was nearly 20 years her senior. He was so smitten with the 18-year-old Lydia Danbury that he proposed matrimony very shortly after meeting her in 1842. She accepted.

Edward and Lydia Struck set up house on 125th Street in New York City and had eight children together. All seemed well until 1863, when Edward lost his job as a police officer and fell into a prolonged depression. According to her published confession, *Lydia Sherman: Confession of the Arch Murderess of Connecticut* (a lurid best seller), rather than have him committed to an asylum, she decided to "put him out of the way, as he would never be any good" again—not the solution most loving spouses would choose. She mixed a "thimbleful" of arsenic into his oatmeal gruel and after several hours of vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea and convulsions, Edward passed away.

Lydia soon realized that although she had "solved" one problem, she had created another in that she had murdered the primary source of income for her and her six remaining children (her eldest son John had moved out and young daughter Josephine had died years earlier of a mysterious illness—her first victim?). Rationalizing like only the sickest mind could, Lydia decided that the youngest three kids "could do nothing" for her or themselves, and thus would be better "out of the way." Less than six weeks after Edward's death, she poisoned all three and watched them die in a single day, which while horrible, didn't arouse much suspicion because it was an era of high child mortality rates when a single sickness could easily wipe out a family.

With fewer "burdens," Lydia's life "improved." A sympathetic doctor provided the "grieving" widow with a job as a nurse, which was well-timed as over the next few months the three children remaining with her would contract various ailments. Lydia's treatment? Hating to see each "suffer," she poisoned them all.

The undiscovered murderer of seven (at least), Lydia now moved around a bit before taking a nursing job in Stratford in 1867. She soon met Dennis Hurlburt, a recently widowed and wealthy gentleman known as "Old" Hurlburt. However, he wasn't Dead Hurlburt (not yet, anyway) and was soon able to "convince" the still-attractive and young-

GREG SHEA

er Lydia to be his bride—once he promised her "all that he was worth."

Again, life was uneventful until Lydia noticed that Old Hurlburt seemed to hurting from various aged-related maladies. Not one to stand suffering, Lydia ended his pain—officially making him Dead Hurlburt—and inherited his $30,000 estate (equal to $500,000 today).

Flush with cash and single again, it took Lydia only eight weeks to connect with Horatio Sherman, another recent widower looking for someone to take care of his four children. A few months later they married and she moved into his Derby home.

Horatio was a heavy drinker and in an alcohol-fueled rant, said that he almost wished his sickly infant son would "die" rather than continue to be miserable. He didn't have to tell Lydia twice—she mixed a little arsenic into the baby's milk and the "suffering" was over in a day. A few months later, she similiarly dispatched her teenaged stepdaughter, who'd had the simple misfortune of catching the flu on Lydia's watch.

Distraught by the sudden deaths of his two beloved children, Horatio went on a weeklong drinking binge. Upset by her husband's alcoholism (and his willingness to spend Old Hurlburt's fortune), it was only a matter of time before Lydia decided to "make him sick of liquor" by spiking his brandy with arsenic. Horatio was dead in a few days.

This time, however, a local physician took notice of Horatio's abrupt death and ordered an autopsy. When poison was discovered, the bodies of the Sherman children and Old Hurlburt were all exhumed. Confronted with the evidence, Lydia confessed to murdering all of them. She was sentenced to life in prison.

In 1877, Lydia briefly escaped jail and had set up with a wealthy widower—fourth time's a charm?—before being apprehended.

The notorious Derby Poisoner was stricken with cancer in 1878, and unlike her vicitms, was forced to "suffer through" to her demise. | R.B. |

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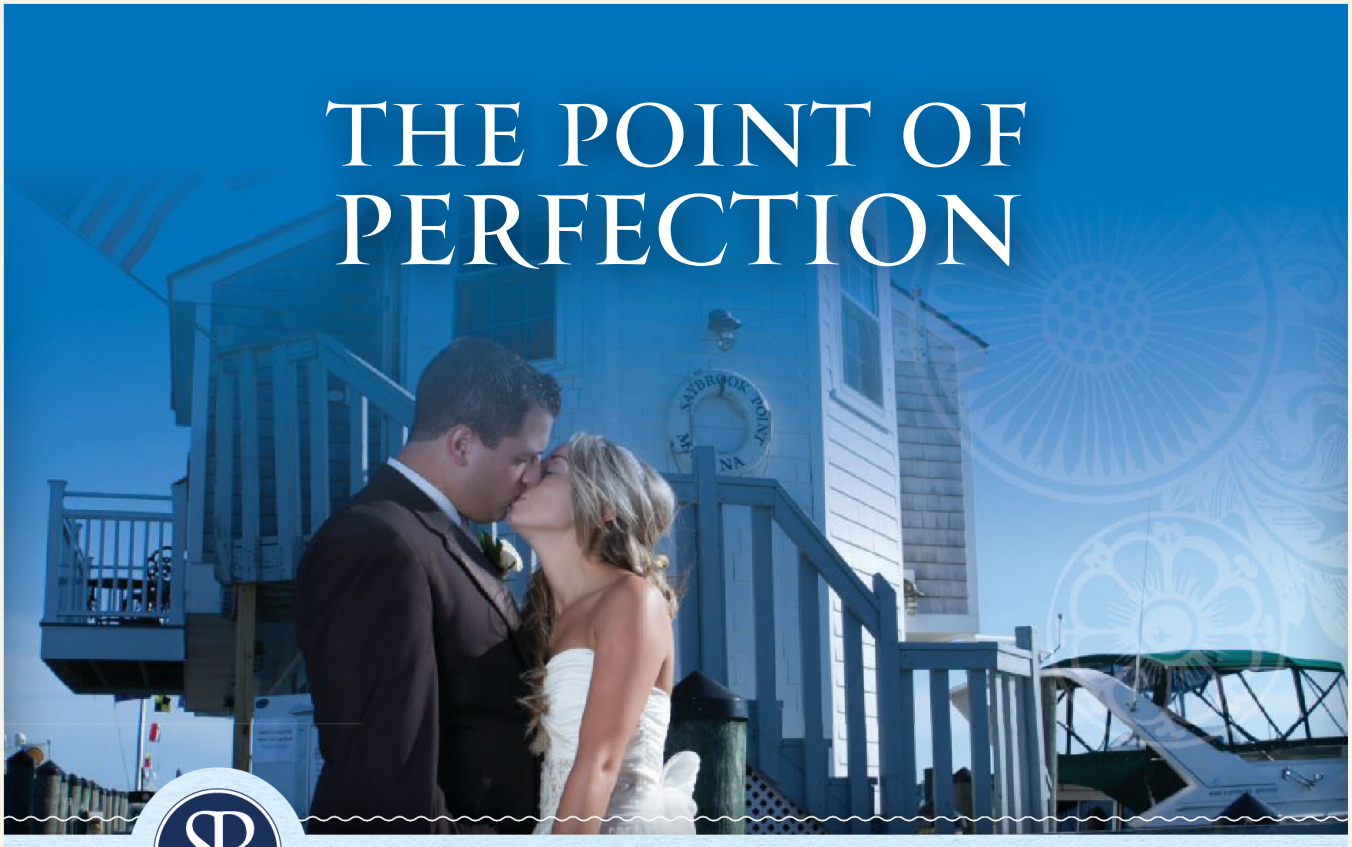

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